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A R E C E N T P H O T O G R A P H

JERRY TARBOT

The Living Unknown Soldier



TYLER PUBLISHING CO.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

We are inspired to publish this volume because of our intense interest in this terribly human case, and because Jerry has succeeded in writing a gripping true story of his war and post-war experiences. We earnestly hope that this book will attain sufficient circulation to restore Jerry to his forgotten past, and rescue him from his bitter loneliness and need.

Picture a soldier of the World War incurably injured mentally and physically in battle; then, stumbling blindly around immediately behind the fighting line in an effort to rejoin his regiment. He wanders into another shell explosion; what is then left of him is picked up and packed to the United States; next follows a long period of complete mental and partial physical oblivion in a reconstruction hospital for the insane in California. Then comes the awakening and Jerry asks, "Where am I? How did I get here?" The nurse tells him, but asks, "Who are you?" The faint flicker of a returning consciousness looks into the kindly face of the nurse, but slips back into the black smoke of the battle front.

Years have passed in which Jerry has devoted himself with feverish desperation to the terrifying—"Who are you?"

If the reader is impressed by the inconsistency of a

mentality capable of writing this book and the inability to recall his pre-war past, read in the appendix of this volume:—

Official letter addressed to Major General Lejeune, Commandant of the U. S. Marine Corps by Col. Frank E. Evans.

The almost parallel medical case of Gustaf Duner, British Army.

The statement of Father Henry McGarvey, S. J. of Fordham University.

THE PUBLISHERS.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I BACK TO LIFE—HOW DID I GET HERE—HELL WAS LAST WEEK	1
II BACK TO THE WORKS—A WOODLAND TRAP—“MONSIEUR EST AMERICAN?”—BARRAGE—A HUMAN VOLCANO	7
III FRENCH HOSPITAL—FRENCH LEAVE—BOOTS	12
IV ANOTHER HOSPITAL—IN AND OUT—HITCH AND HIKE—MACHINE GUNS MENDED WHILE YOU WAIT—LOST AGAIN—ALONE WITH THE DEAD—A DUEL—AND I PASSED OUT	18
V “AS YOU WERE”—IN BED—COBWEBS AND COOL PILLOWS—A LETTER TO MOM—BIG BILL WAS LIKE A BROTHER—A CLIMBING COON	26
VI GOOD-BYE STOCKTON—THE CABOOSE OF A CATTLE TRAIN—A HOME IN THE HILLS—SURE ENOUGH I WAS HOME, BUT WHO WAS I?	30
VII A VINEYARD HEAVEN—EGG HOUNDS	34
VIII A CHICKEN CHAPTER	39
IX CANINE COUSINS—NATURE’S NATIVE SONS—A WILD MAN OF THE WOODS—A HOME-MADE HAIRCUT—MOVING A RIVER	42
X TROUBLESOME NEIGHBORS—A BOOTLEGGING BARBER	50
XI A FALSE CHARGE—I LOSE MY GRIP	55
XII THE HINGES OF HELL—HOSPITALS AND HARPIES	57
XIII DOPE AND DEVILTRY—A FAITHFUL PHYSICIAN—A FIRM RESOLVE	62
XIV THE LONG TRAIL BEGINS—A FOOTNOTE TO FAME—“HE WENT IN WITH THE BOYS”	67
XV MOTOR MADNESS	70
XVI SLANDER	76

CHAPTER	PAGE
XVII THE-KNOW-IT-ALLS—FREAKISH FARMING . . .	79
XVIII A MAGNETIC MAJOR—THE SUBCONSCIOUS MIND —PAGES OF PUBLICITY	83
XIX MOTHER-LOVE AND MOCKERY—FEEDING THEM FLAGS—"WHERE ARE THE GOLD-STAR FATHERS?"	90
XX A DESERT INTERLUDE	94
XXI SUPERNATURAL GIFTS—"HOW DID THE DOG KNOW?"	99
XXII LITTLE VOICES FROM THE PAST	103
XXIII THE OBSTINATE BARRIER—THE BOY IS MYSELF, BUT I CAN'T CATCH THE NAME	107
XXIV A CROSS-CONTINENT QUEST—I WORK MY PAS- SAGE TO A HOSPITAL—THE BIG CITY AND THE OLD SCHOOL	110
XXV "DOMINUS VOBISCUM"—THE RESERVE TREASURE OF LIFE	117
XXVI THE PENALTIES OF PUBLICITY—GLORY GRABBERS —SPOTLIGHT, STUNTS OR STARVATION	121
XXVII A GLIMPSE OF THE PAST—A TANGLE OF RED (CROSS) TAPE	126
XXVIII "IT PAYS TO HAVE A PULL"	132
XXIX IN WHICH THE VETERANS' BUREAU IS NOT PRAISED—WORDS VERSUS DEEDS—THE GOD PUBLICITY—ECONOMY IS THE WATCHWORD— MILLIONS FOR PUBLICITY AND NOT A CENT FOR BATH-TUBS—A REGIMENT OF OFFICIALS TO A PLATOON OF PATIENTS—APOSTLES OF WHITE- WASH	135
XXX A SUBWAY RIDE—A BALLGAME	142
XXXI GOOD OLD NEW YORK—GROPING FOR THE PAST	146
XXXII FAILURES—MY NAME IS LOST	149
XXXIII CONGRESSIONAL CHICANERY—A MOLEHILL CHAMPION	154
XXXIV THE END OF THE FARCE	160
XXXV REFLECTIONS AND A WAR RECORD—MY REAL NAME HAS NOT BEEN FOUND	170

JERRY TARBOT

CHAPTER I

BACK TO LIFE—HOW DID I GET HERE—HELL WAS
LAST WEEK

A subdued murmur of voices merged with sounds of labored breathing; gentle pressure on the side of my bed as of someone bending over me; the touch of a cool soft hand on my face—"Coming thru at last, doing nicely."—"Doctor, you think he will——" "Yes, today—watch him." Footsteps receding. I was loath to open my eyes. Luxurious sense of ease thru every inch of my body. This place—a hospital, real bed—rest. Soft breeze thru open door somewhere; delicate scent of green fields strangely mixing with faint odor of disinfectant, querulous, sleepy chirping of birds, muffled boo—ong of clock striking the hour—boo—ong! boo—ong!—two—four—boo—ong!—rest, sleep another hour—day—year.

Again a murmur of whispering, shuffling of slipped feet; the touch of a cool soft hand on my face; someone drawing the blankets back, gentle fingers questing over my chest—"Normal—yes, today—shortly—report at once"—; blankets drawn back in place; footsteps receding. Feel of sunshine on my face. Sure, a hos-

pital back of the line, in my own sector; voices speaking American. Sounds of labored breathing—wonder who else is here—maybe Butch and Roary, and that guy I gave a drink to. . . . Peaceful swimming whales! The last one was the grandpa of them all—must have been a whole battery firing at once . . . wonder if that bunch got thru . . . and that big Heinie . . . poor sucker must have been crazy! Well, no more guerre for him.

A moan somewhere near, creaking of cot springs . . . again the murmur of voices—gentle, cool hand on my face, someone questing for my arm, feeling for my pulse. . . . “Easy! don’t wake him—yes, normal.” That big Heinie; that lad croaking for water . . . water; gee, but my throat felt dry! I’d better sit up; nurse would give me a drink . . . water, ginger . . . maybe wine . . . steps receding . . . a drink . . . OH NURSE! Two men, one nurse, leaping towards my cot; anxiety, suspense on their faces; “Easy, easy, old man! doing fine!” gentle hands pressing me back on pillows; “want a drink? here!” delicious fluid trickling down my throat. Sunshine, sunshine everywhere. Long rows of beds, men sleeping, some sitting up, one or two calling; Doctor feeling my pulse; nurse stroking my face; a smile in her eyes, tears on her cheeks. . . . “Where am I?” . . . “Easy, easy, big boy!” Blankets flung aside, bare feet pounding the floor; a bald fat old man yelling; “Don’t you believe them! Shure and its a doirty pack of liars they are! It’s meself, me own self, who is the true Son of God!” Big orderly shooing the old man back to bed—“Sit

down, sit down and put on your legs" another voice clamoring; big Orderly rushing to hush him up. "I wanna go home! I wanna go home!" Air filled with shouts. "Oi, oi! lookit the birdie! . . . my wife paid for it! oi, oi!" Big Orderly rushing here and there. Doctor bending over me, nurse stroking my head; I held her hand; "Nurse! what . . . when . . . where am I?" "Easy, easy big boy! You are going out of here." Rolling motion, bed and all towards open door, across the hall into cool spacious, sunlit room. Where am I? Big Orderly grabbed my arm, a glad smile on his face; "You have snapped out of it, eh? Take it easy, boy, you been sick a long time; you'll be up pretty quick now." "Where am I?" This a frog joint?—any of my outfit in the other room? what town are we near?" "You are in Stockton, boy! Stockton, California. The old war is over, you are home! been sick a long time!"

A long time! no, not such an awful long time—couldn't have been—why, not more than a week ago I was with the bunch. . . . That trip to the rear, escorting the Heinie prisoner—no, not such an awful long time!—the other room—the old man—Son of God—sleep, rest another hour—day—month——.

A gentle tugging at my shoulder woke me up; big Orderly standing with tray; CHOW! oh boy! I sat up. Eggs and toast and coffee and peaches and cream—eggs and toa—gee, maybe the damned old war WAS over!

"Bill, where am I?"

"Eat your breakfast boy! Doctor will be here soon."

The door swung open and Doctor came in; small in bulk, wearing glasses, enormous pipe in his mouth.

"How do you feel son?"

"Great, Doc, but where am I?"

"You don't know?"

"No, Sir, Big Bill here, says war is over. This is Stockton, U. S. A., how did I get here? where is my bunch?"

"Yes, the old war is over, son; sure enough you are home in the U. S. A.; take it easy now, I'll be back."

Doctor walked out; Big Bill followed with tray. Home, in the U. S. A. . . . what's coming off here! how the h——I did I get home—I laid back on the pillows. Outside, a mocking bird was warbling away, as far as my eyes could see thru the open window there stretched a waving sea of blossoms, pink and white; sunshine floating everywhere. . . . A long time? . . . home? . . . I closed my eyes—it could not be! only a short time ago I had been on the line; for some reason or another had been detailed to escort a Fritz prisoner to the rear . . . hated the detail, but had to go; it had meant leaving the outfit and a fifty-fifty chance of finding them gone when I got back . . . no! that had not happened such a long time ago! why, the whole scene was fresh in my mind yet; all the details of it. The poor scared Heinie, the roads, the woods . . . let's see now; we had followed an old trench, originally dug by the Germans, and that particular Fritz must have seen duty in it, for every time we passed a dug-out he tried to tell me all about it. That hombre would never know how near he had been to becoming a good Fritz

the first time he grabbed my arm and tried to duck in one of the dug-outs. Yeh! he acted jumpy all right . . . and that was not so awfully long ago! what did Doc and the Orderly mean . . . a long time sick . . . the war over . . . home in the U. S. A.! Hell's Bells! Someone was kidding me! That trip had turned out even worse than I expected. Something wrong! way back in my head a funny feeling as if something was settling . . . hardening. Let's see! let's take stock; the prisoner had tried to duck in a dug-out and dragged me with him. I did not care much for the detail anyway, and was hoping he would start something and give me a chance to cut it short. He pulled out an old cracked photograph showing a little house and some trees, and made it apparent it was his place back home, then he pointed all around and gave an imitation of a doggone good man using a pick and shovel and held up first one finger and then half a finger; he must have meant he had been in that trench a year and a half, or a month and a half, or something. I could not do anything about it, so made it as plain as I could that side trips to dug-outs were strictly taboo on this particular journey.

After a mile or so we got out in the open and it was not far to the stockade to which we were heading. Somehow Fritz sensed that; all of a sudden, down he flopped and started tearing his boots off, then his pants. I thought he was going to stage an impromptu cootie hunt and, surely that was neither the time nor the place for it, but when I jerked him to his feet he dived for the old photograph again and made violent gestures

toward himself and the little house among the trees. Then he actually begged to take off his drawers. For the life of me I did not know what to think—I could not see any relation between his underwear and the house in the photograph, but I saw light pretty quick. Off came his underwear, back on went his pants and boots and Fritz started walking down the road holding his underwear aloft and waving it.

Wise boy, that—he had made for himself a flag of truce. One man who had had all he wanted of that war. He wanted to get back to that little house among the trees. But, holy mackerel, can you see the picture? A full accoutered doughboy in his own sector, escorting a prisoner who had suddenly become an animated semaphore, waving a pair of drawers!

If I ever laughed, I did then. Should anybody have seen us I should never have heard the last of it. I had to actually tear the thing from his hands and from there on we went on the double quick. But he was nervous—the nearer we got to the stockade the less he knew what to do with his arms,—up in the air—straight out in front of him—down to his sides—jabbering something all the while. I believe the poor nut went cuckoo. A farmer, perhaps, carried away by the wave of enthusiasm for glory and conquest, then bitterly disillusioned by the miserable reality of the slaughter house—called the battlefield.

CHAPTER II

BACK TO THE WORKS—A WOODLAND TRAP—"MONSIEUR
EST AMERICAN?"—BARRAGE—A HUMAN VOLCANO

On the way back to the line, I saw a chance for a short cut thru what had been a small wood—mostly second growth, with here and there the furrow of a large calibre shell, and isolated, burned patches where explosions had set fire to the leaves and dead wood. There was no tree of a size large enough to offer cover, but the place seemed to be ideal for machine gun pits.

The Heinies had been masters of the terrain for a long time; that was plainly seen by the substantial way the trenches thereabouts had been laid out and dug. There was no trench line thru the woods proper, and I understood why; in case of attack by the Allies, the attacking troops could only deploy over the down slope of a hill to the right; they would have to risk a plunging fire from the top of the hill and a feasible zone of enfilading fire by machine guns on the trenches' parapets. The woods had been left untouched by trench digging for the good and somewhat clever reason of serving as bait.

The attacking troops would find themselves under a devastating fire on two sides—probably a barrage at the rear would preclude retirement and the woods

would seem to offer some sort of shelter or cover. If any troops lived to reach the woods, that was the end of them—they were pocketed, absolutely.

I made my way thru it, guided by the top of a hill I knew and by the sun. The work of shrapnel and machine guns was very much in evidence, the ground and the low vegetation showed signs of poison gases.

There were no corpses nor any equipment lying anywhere, but it was easily seen that the place had seen plenty of both.

Of course, the enemy had been blasted out of there long ago, and there was not a chance in the world of their ever retaking it—the American troops had that sector. Still, I wanted to avail myself of the opportunity to observe the system employed by the enemy—it might serve at some future time. In due time, I reached the open again and kept on.

I saw a cloud of dust rising to the south and knew that a sizable body of troops were on the move. Out of curiosity I loafed along so they would come up near enough for me to see whom they were; shortly, I could discern them quite plainly, they were French Colonials, headed in the general direction of the sector held by the U. S. troops.

I stood for a few minutes watching them, then cut across the road in front of a battery of soixante-quinze guns. A swarthy Moroccan caught up with me and said: "*Monsieur est Americain?*" I nodded. He snapped to attention, saluted and requested that I go with him to his captain. The battery had come to a halt. We went a few steps to the rear and brought up

in front of the battery commander—a captain, sitting a dust-caked, powerfully built horse. I saluted and waited for him to speak. He wanted to know how long the U. S. troops had been there and in what numbers. I set him right on the first question, but gave him the only answer permitted by the code of the front line—the code of not giving out information—to his second question. I told him we had been there some two weeks and that there were *beaucoup, très beaucoup Américains*.

He seemed pleased, nodded his head in dismissal and barked a command in some heathenish colonial jargon—the battery started on its way again, and I cut across the fields to get away from the dust.

Meanwhile, the ever shifting muffled roar of artillery seemed to grow more distinct, occasionally I could hear the rumbling diapason of a heavy shell—something seemed to urge me forward at a faster speed than I had been making.

Half a dozen shells came arching over and let go, some seven hundred yards to my left—I hit the dirt, quick as a flash, got up and took it on the run towards the line. More shells, of a smaller calibre, whizzed over and let go, about two hundred yards to the left and rear—I hit the dirt, got up, ran forward towards the line. A steady swelling thunder grew all around. I knew the signs, a barrage by the enemy was on and there was a mile or more between me and my outfit. I ran, maybe I prayed, most certainly I cursed the whole war to hell including the prisoner who had been the cause of my trip.

A barrage to the rear of our sector could only mean one thing; the enemy was going to attack in strong numbers and wanted to prevent reinforcements. I ran and ran—then I stopped. Old Tom, my rifle, was missing. Back I went a few hundred feet and there was the old timer, lying where it had slid off my shoulder when I hit the dirt to dodge possible shell fragments. The enemy were firing in earnest by then—they had established the range, but sounds as welcome as a drink of red wine came to me from near at hand—sounds of shells—going away. Our own artillery had sprung to action. I ran. Twenty or thirty minutes more and I would be with the bunch. Shells rumbled and rushed overhead but the explosions seemed muffled—I knew—gas shells. I tore at the gas mask, to put it on; it was not there—had dropped off somewhere—I ran, then half of France came up and hit me square in the face. I flew in the air, God knows how high. I hurtled down into an abyss, God knows how deep. Suddenly I was sprawling in a crater, and a million tons of dirt were on me, or so it felt. I wiggled and shook and heaved and kicked till I was free. The dizzy din of barbaric trumpets in my ears eased off, the flaming red of everything changed to a softer hue, I counted my limbs—yep, they were all there. I looked up—loose earth was trickling down the side of the crater, tiny eddies of dust whirled and waned away, the acrid odor of burned explosive was settling down from above.

I moved a little, then headed for the top. A whole army of little devils were in possession of every muscle

in my body—I got half way to the top, clutched at my shoulder and stopped. Old Tom, my rifle was gone, and by the same token, Jenny Lind, my '45, had disappeared, too. That was the last straw—I was sore from head to foot, had dirt and pebbles in my ears, in my nose, in my eyes. One leg of my breeches was gone, so was the tunic and most of my shirt, the tin kelly was God knows where. I just sat down and let the war go on without me.

It was dark and pleasantly cool when someone woke me up—two husky figures loomed over me, muttering—a flash of light dazzled me an instant, I felt myself lifted and dragged upward. I guess I went to sleep then——.

CHAPTER III

FRENCH HOSPITAL—FRENCH LEAVE—BOOTS

The hospital was like a wee bit of an island in the middle of a turbid stream; all kinds of human wreckage floated by. Some settled on the shore, some sank at the doorstep of help, some paused an instant, then floated away. Savage colonials, looking even more savage in pain, stoic orientals, nonchalant poilus. Black robed, white capped nurses, bearded doctors. As near as I could make out from the gibberish of the black attendant, I had been there three weeks.

A fresh batch of Moroccans was brought in and the place was jammed. I had two good legs and my arms were O. K., all that ailed me was a bandage around my head. There was a pile of clothes at the entrance to the hallway; I did not care for hospital life, not in a French hospital, anyway,—I was on my way.

The coat I had grabbed fitted me all right, but the breeches must have belonged to a very short man—they fitted me like a pair of swimming trunks. The air outside felt fine—I headed north.

At a farm house a mile or so up the road I stopped to find out more or less where I was. A water bucket on the edge of a well in the center of the yard tempted me and I went over and drank deep. An old, old



JERRY

A RECENT PHOTOGRAPH

looking woman appeared in the doorway jabbering something—two or three kids joined her, then a younger woman and an old patriarch of a man—he had a shotgun pointed in my general direction. I let out one yell. “*Americain!*” The old gent handed the blunderbuss to one of the women and came over to the well. I came darn near forgetting all my doughboy French, when I needed it worst. Pointing all around I said; “*Moi perdu!*” meaning: “I am lost.” Then I sat down suddenly, the whole place whirling around.

The old grandmother began to fuss with the bandage on my head; the old gent, a wise old coot, held a bottle of *vin rouge* to my lips. I explained what I wanted—directions on how to get back to the American Lines. They had me in the center of a circle, all babbling at the same time. I did not savvy much of their kind of French, so I agreed to everything they said. The old man motioned to me and we went in the house. He took a pair of high boots down from a peg and motioned for me to put them on. I did, they fitted fine. The old gent struck a Napoleonic pose and said: “*Elles sont de la guerre du dixhuit cent soixant dix,*” then he lurched forward and, before I could defend myself, he kissed me on both cheeks! Oh, my head.

I stood up, shook hands with everybody, and started on my way. I did not know much more about the directions then, but I was sporting a pair of boots whose tops lacked only six inches or so of reaching the bottom of my pants. I felt great, and I looked like a Scotch Highlander who had lost the skirt of his kilts while crossing a stream.

At a crossroad, I came upon the control—two or three French soldiers controlling and directing traffic. I was in soft—a ride up to the front was sure. To my question as to the whereabouts of my outfit, they could only give general answers: "Yes, *les Américains* were up that way," pointing north, "They were "*très-beaucoup*" and they were "*très bons soldats*," but what in the world kind of outfit did I belong to, with such a mixed uniform as I had on. The blouse of a Zouave, the breeches of some Colonial, a pair of boots of the war of 1870, and a bandage for a chapeau. I explained that I had been scratched up, had been sent to a first-aid dug-out, had been there two or three days, someone had made a mistake and got away with my clothes. He looked at me kind of queer and shook his head, muttering something to his mates. Then he laughed right out. There had been no Americans up that way for nearly five weeks, the nearest guess he could give was that they were half way to Germany by that time, and that I had better go back to a hospital. No, I could not do that. I simply had to find my company. I told him that, and added that it was imperative for me to find *mon capitaine*. "All right," he said, "you are fou, très fou, but we'll fix you up for a ride." In the little shack, where I waited, they had a gourd of red wine. Oh boy! From the driver of the camion that gave me a lift, I found out that one army of *les Américains* were holding a sector some twenty kilometres up the line, due north. It was good enough for me. At break of the day, I thought I recognized the surrounding territory. The more I looked, the surer I

was. Two hills, a patch of woods, the tiny ribbon of a stream—I edged towards the tail end of the camion and slid quietly to the ground.

The ride had not done my head any good, but a good rest in the ditch fixed me up. I took to the fields and it was not long before I hit hot stuff. I mean territory which had been recently shelled over, or for all I knew, was still in the zone of fire. There were no dead men on the ground, but lots of other evidence. I found a good Springfield rifle—the man who had had it before had probably swapped it for a harp or a shovel, so it became mine. In less than no time I found lots of good cartridges for it and also a '45, a dozen of them, in fact. I appropriated one. I hunted and hunted, but devil a bit could I find a pack, but I did find one leggin which I cut in two and patched up the gap between the top of my 1870 boots and my 1918 pants.

It took me a long time to find a canteen that did not have a hole in it—when I did find one, it was almost full of good water. And all that time I felt a strange familiarity with the place—something like a man who finds himself in a new room of a building he has lived in before. As I approached the woods, I felt more and more that way. Then I came upon a ravine and I knew. We had lambasted the everlasting day-lights out of Heinie on that very spot. Just a little way ahead, I would find a little town that had been the objective of my company, and had been reached and taken by only a fragment of a platoon led by a giant Viking of a lieutenant, red-haired, florid of face, flaming of eye, with only about twenty-five assorted

leathernecks making up the storming party. We did not have enough ammunition when we reached that town to fire a salute for a buck private. The cellar of a house had been our stronghold and four Gyrenes had volunteered to go back and establish contact with battalion headquarters. Yep, they had gone, and not one of them got thru—enemy bullets found them all—but relief had come, and the town had been swept clear of all enemy troops.

In time I reached the town, and saw plenty of signs of active occupation—lots of soldiers about the street, motor cars and the like, but they were not my outfit.

I could not very well go in, what with the shape I was in and the hybrid uniform I wore—still, something had to be done, I was hungry as a wolf and something was the matter with my head. That night I took a chance. I made a break for the main street and watched from the vantage point of a ruined building. A lone doughboy came navigating down the street and as he got abreast of me I called. I asked him for a light, then a cigarette, then for a drink, then for some dough. "Say!" he finally said, "what do you think this is, a Christmas party?" No, I did not think that, but, if he cared for it, I had the finest souvenir in the whole country—I spread it on thick. Some little time back I had been billeted in a Chateau belonging to a very fine noble family of France, and I had made friends with a mademoiselle on the place, and, thru her, I had gotten a pair of boots worn by the head of that noble family at the Battle of Waterloo. They were worth thousands of francs to any museum, but he

could have them for a hundred or a spare uniform or what had he. He had twenty francs and a spare uniform, all but the coat. We traded—I put on the clothes he brought out, he took the boots the old farmer had given me.

CHAPTER IV

ANOTHER HOSPITAL—IN AND OUT—HITCH AND HIKE—
MACHINE GUNS MENDED WHILE YOU WAIT—LOST
AGAIN—ALONE WITH THE DEAD—A DUEL—AND I
PASSED OUT

I became popular with quite a few of the boys—my French was more understandable than the average doughboy's. One of the rare miracles of the battle line happened at just about that time, a pay day—everybody had money. I borrowed some and hung around town. Nothing had come out of several efforts of mine to find out just where my outfit had gone. I heard they had gone to the Champagne Sector. I heard that they were just a few kilometres ahead, that they had all been gassed and killed, that they had been sent back to the S. O. S. lines, that they had gone home to the U. S. A.

One evening I went to see a civilian French doctor—an old, old man. He took the bandage off my head and started to ask a lot of questions, seemed to be put out about something, but I did not savvy French, not that night. He worked on me a while, then wrapped me up again and told me to come back next day. I did, so did an M.P.—I lied short and tall, in English and French, but I might as well have saved my breath. He was a hard boiled hombre with many, many years

of army life—even when I told him the truth he would not listen, so over we went to headquarters. There I told the O. D. my tale of woe—he read a paper the M. P. brought from the frog doctor and buzzed for an orderly. In a few minutes I was on the way to sick bay, under guard. They thought I was either cuckoo or A.W.O.L. The thing that damned me was that I had no dog tag—had lost it in that French hospital. I think I was able to give my number to the C. O., though, but even if he had felt inclined to check up on it, it would have taken weeks or months of backing and filling and red tape.

I was kept in that hospital a few days, stripped of everything, as they thought—but I did have two fifty franc notes. A rumor floated around that the outfit was moving up to the front, and an orderly told me I was to be moved to the guard house. I sized him up for a white guy and asked him if it was not possible to get some clothes. He understood my fix. One of the fifty franc notes helped some. That evening I went out of that hospital, free, and besides I had a pass, fictitious, true enough, but it would do in a pinch. Also I had a dog tag strapped around my wrist. I never knew whose dog tag it was, but guessed it belonged to someone who had gone west.

I went to a wine shop and paid for a place to sleep, a small epicerie supplied me with a chunk of bread, some sardines and cheese,—I wrapped the whole mess into a parcel, went back to the wine shop, bought two bottles of wine, added them to the parcel and went to bed. Long before daylight, I got up and lit out of that

place, keeping an eye peeled for prowling M.P.'s. I headed north and kept going till I hit the highway, then scouted around and found a suitable place where I made camp.

Lots of trucks and camions went by. The up traffic was mostly empties except for an ambulance train that was loaded and it made me think. They could not be coming direct from the battlefield, for there were too many of them in a bunch, so they must be coming from a field hospital, and heading for the hospital where I had just been or some other nearby. A field hospital meant troops in action. I laid low all that day and night. I made friends with a toad and he gave evidence of an educated taste; he liked bread crumbs and sardine tails.

At about noon the next day I heard unmistakable sounds of a large body of troops on the go and coming my way. I flattened myself in the brush. In about an hour the vanguard drove by and right after came companies, one after another. I judged it to be a regiment. I noted that no packs were carried, and that gave me the idea that if I could get to wherever that bunch were going and get there quick, I might be able to scare up a pack and maybe a rifle. I felt naked as the dickens without one. One bottle of wine remained. I took that, gave the toad what scraps there were and hiked away from there.

I heard a vehicle behind me coming fast, exhaust wide open and an occasional toot of the horn. That guy was in a hurry. As he flashed by I leaped for the tail gate, caught on and found myself sprawling on a

canvas piled on the bed of the truck. There were two fellows on the seat but they had not noticed me at all. We traveled fast for an hour or so before we caught up with the rear of the outfit on the hike. Sensing complications, I nudged the driver, he jammed the brakes on and there followed a fast bit of explaining; I belonged to the H. Q. Co., had been left behind to do some last minute packing, had missed the lieutenant's car and here I was, trying to catch up with the bunch. Would they let me ride? The full bottle helped a favorable answer. The driver said they were in the same fix themselves. Their stuff was supposed to be hours ahead of the column, but a break down had caused delay. We went. In less than no time we had cleared the marching troops and had the road to ourselves, except for slower moving truck trains that we passed. Being supposed to be from H. Q. Co., I could not very well ask where we were going, but wherever it was, it suited me.

We halted at a crossroad. I guessed it was a control point—there were hundreds of trucks, cars and camions, also machine guns and cases of ammunition which were being unloaded. I knew that make of machine guns, the Hotchkiss, and on the spur of the moment I took a chance. I slid off the truck, approached a captain who seemed to be in command, saluted and asked if he could pass me thru the lines, telling him the same story I had told the driver. That captain was a much harassed man just then, he just looked at me and snapped out: "Know anything about these things?" waving toward the M. G.'s. "Yes, sir." "Well, forget

your H. Q. Co., pitch in and lend a hand." I was in, solid. I had made connections with the chow line and blankets. We stayed there two days, I think, unloading and assembling the antiquated things—the rumble of artillery fire started drifting down from the north, and the old war was on again. We had hardly crawled in the blankets on the third night when runners started rousing everybody. The outfit had made contact with the enemy—we were going in—right now—pronto. A line of trucks stood on the road, some of the guns had been parked way down in the field. We had no mules or whippet tanks to help drag them to the road, so man power did it. We hauled and tugged and cursed and laughed and by daybreak the last convoy of trucks was under way, north bound.

Hell broke loose before we had gone five miles. A squadron of Heinie's airplanes started it. After they got rid of their bombs, they must have signaled to their artillery, for we found ourselves in perfect range immediately. I don't know how many got away alive. I found myself hiking across fields, headed north.

Airplanes seemed to have a particular yen for some particular spot, for they seemed to be all flying in the same direction. Sounds of firing were increasing in volume as I progressed. I did not have a rifle; I did not have a '45; I did not have a solitary hand grenade; there I was, near the line I had been breaking my neck to reach and I did not have a doggone thing to make war with.

The ground thereabouts had just recently been

fought over. As I topped a hummock I saw about fifty soldiers lying dead—strung almost in a straight line. They were all Germans, enfiladed by machine gun fire as they left their trench, for the hummock I stood on was the parapet of a trench. There were lots of rifles lying around, also side arms. I grabbed a Mauser, all the shells I could carry, and a Luger automatic. Heavy firing was going on half a mile ahead. I could see the dust clouds and the red streaks of fire. It was awful lonesome where I was. Nobody but me and the stiff, and they were getting more and more numerous as I went on, and were not all Germans, either. I dropped the Mauser to pick up a Springfield lying by the side of a lad who had gone West, and as I stooped, I saw the Corps emblem on the coat collar of that lad—he had been of the outfit I was seeking—the outfit I had lost when I took that prisoner to the rear. A hoarse call made me spin around, a blood blinded figure was feebly waving one hand. I ran to him. He, also, wore the same insignia. His canteen still held some water. I gave him a drink, washed the blood from his face, asked him if a certain company was on the line. He said, "Yes." I made him as comfortable as I could and ran toward the line. A small body of troops deployed to my right—Yank—I knew by the tin kellies. I ran faster. Out of nowhere a big six-footer jumped up in front of me with his hands in the air. I was scared out of a year's growth and darn near fired at him before I realized he wanted to be taken prisoner. I noticed the skull and bones on his helmet and knew he

was—a Prussian Guard. I did not want a prisoner right then, so motioned him to lie down. He did, flat on his stomach. I started off on my way. A door banged right behind me and a bee buzzed by my ear: I about faced and there stood my Heinie blazing away at me with an automatic. The damn fool had made it a personal issue. I guess I forgot the Luger I had. I went at him with the bayonet. He grabbed it as I came in, pulled and swung wide, and in a fraction of a second I was swinging thru the air in a circle holding on to the butt of the rifle, and the Heinie whirling me around. He must have been as strong as a span of oxen. I lost my hold, hit the ground some twenty yards away from him and the wind was all knocked out of me. He shouldered the piece and fired at me. The bullet went high; he tried to work the bolt but could not quite make it, so he came at me with the bayonet, my own bayonet. He was the most terrific sight I ever saw or want to see. Stark mad, destruction and terror in his beady eyes. It fascinated me for an instant. He lunged at me while I was still on the ground but only just grazed my cheek with the point of the bayonet—that made me mad; I jumped up before he could recover his balance and let him have it from the gun made in his own country, the Luger. I gave him all the bullets I had, when he slumped, I grabbed the rifle from him and gave him the steel, then worked a fresh cartridge in the chamber and gave him that.

I headed for the line again but must have gone the

wrong way, for I ran into a barrage. The only thin chance of salvation was to push ahead. I tried.

A dazzling glare of light flashed in front of me, a million bees hummed in my ears, and—I passed out——.

CHAPTER V

"AS YOU WERE"—IN BED—COBWEBS AND COOL PILLOWS
—A LETTER TO MOM—BIG BILL WAS LIKE A BROTHER
—A CLIMBING COON

Well, here I was, now; in this hospital. Both arms were in place; both legs where they belonged; not a thing the matter as far as I could see. I couldn't have been hurt badly when that shell let go . . . and yet . . . how the devil had I got home? Maybe the last shell had been the signal for the whole war to stop, eh? Hell no! that couldn't be! something wrong. . . . The gang, my outfit; let's see; we had been stationed two days at the last place; before that, we had been at—what the hell! where had we been before that? The old head began to throb, I raised a hand to rub the hair, a little spot right on top of my head burst into flame, or so it felt. Cobwebs before the eyes—rushing waters; high pitched pi . . . iing of pebbles striking silver bells—feel of soft, cool pillows against burning cheeks. Rapid easing of pain, swift clearing of eyes, O. K. again. Where had the outfit been before? There was a river—no, not there—well, a little later maybe I would remember. The nurse came into the room; a portly matron; kindly face, billowing yellow hair; she sat at the edge of the bed, felt my pulse; "How do you feel, boy?" "Fine, thank you. Say, nurse, how's chances

for a little drink?" "Yes, I'll get you one after a while; I want you to do me a favor right now; I want you to sit up and write a nice long letter to your mother at home. Will you do that for me?" "Sure I will! gimme some paper." She handed me a tablet with pencil and walked out; "Hey, don't forget that drink!" Sitting up, I started to write; "Dearest Mom," . . . All at once a squirt of fire hit me on the head; when I woke up there were four or five doctors in the room; it was night, for the lights were burning. They all walked out except Doc who had been with me in the morning; he looked grave and worried. I tried to sit up, but the old bean refused to budge from the pillow; I wanted to speak, but my throat had turned to wood, and the tongue to clay . . . what t'hell! Doc leaned over me "'S all right old man! you'll be O. K. soon." The following morning I was able to get out of bed for a while; a wheel-chair, Big Bill pushing me around. Sitting by the window . . . miles and miles of blossoms waving in the breeze, sunshine flooding everywhere; but there seemed to be a chill somewhere in my soul. Mocking birds and larks singing in an ecstasy of bliss, but their song echoed in my heart more like the last note of a farewell song by a dear friend departing forever. Life, which had seemed so alluring the day before, held no thrill now. I was blue.

I sat up more and more as the days went by; in a week or so I was able to hit the deck at reveille and stay up till taps. I had the freedom of the grounds; went to town whenever I wished; was under no restraint.

Very tactfully Big Bill had explained to me the nature of the place; it was a State Hospital for the Insane. Big Bill was like a brother, he had a heart as big as a house. The mornings were usually spent in the ward, where I was given charge of the labor detail; two hours a day for all the patients pushing a small block around to polish the floor. They were a gentle bunch, the poor unfortunates. All ages; all sizes; all nationalities. All seemingly healthy, all with the brains of three-year-old children. A young colored chap we had, a boy of perhaps 18 years, with big wistful eyes like a lost puppy. Docile and willing, only——. Well, one morning a patient reported the electric light bulb missing from the dormitory. I went to look and, sure enough, there hung the empty socket, a full ten feet from the floor and no way to reach it, only by a stepladder, and there was no stepladder in the place. I gave up the puzzle and reported to Bill. He smiled, straightway he went to the young negro's bed, reached under the pillow—and, sure enough, there was the light bulb. Still, how it got there was a mystery and Bill and I were stumped. Then an old man told us. The colored lad had stood his bed on end, during the night, and climbing on it had got the bulb. A young child's mind and a man's body. Any shining object was an irresistible attraction to him, and he was able to perform incredible feats of agility to gain his ends. I caught him several times after than trying to loosen and carry away a big four foot glass, solidly built into one of the wash-room walls. And yet he had no sense

of value or greed. In fact every time his faithful old mother brought him fruit or candy he gave it all away at once, only,—he was always sure to try and steal back the candy, if it happened to be the shiny kind.

CHAPTER VI

GOOD-BYE STOCKTON—THE CABOOSE OF A CATTLE TRAIN
—A HOME IN THE HILLS—SURE ENOUGH I WAS
HOME, BUT WHO WAS I?

A few weeks went by; the nature of the place began telling on me, for it was impossible to avoid entirely some sort of contact with the other inmates. Many times I sat under an old Madrone tree there, and tried to analyse my situation. One recurring incident which puzzled me and the whole staff of doctors was that each and every effort to recall the starting point of my outfit brought on a fit of actual pain in the head; I would grow dizzy, hear the sound of rushing waters, then the ping—ping—pi-iiing of marbles striking silver bells and fall unconscious. The same thing happened whenever I tried to write a letter home. Yet I was normal in every other way. My brain seemed to be a house of many chambers; I was able and free to use any of the chambers but one. That one chamber seemed to be a forbidden spot; yet it occupied a central place and caused a sort of detour in order to reach the others.

On a bright sunny morning I caught sight of a man walking thru the grounds; a soldier wearing a highly distinctive uniform. The sight of him galvanized an excited feeling in me; somewhere, sometime, I had

mingled with such soldiers as he, indeed, the last bit of action I had seen had been fought by just such as he. The feeling of dissatisfaction with life in that hospital for the insane grew to a pitch that was unbearable. After I saw that soldier I just had to go away from there. I spoke to Bill about it; he started the machinery in motion and in a very short time I was given my discharge.

Across the way from the hospital stood a roundhouse. There I went, looking for means to get out of town. San Francisco, the big city, was only a few miles away and I had a plan to go there. A mechanic working on a locomotive hailed me, and as soon as he found out the circumstances promised to see me thru. In a few minutes I was on my way, riding in the caboose of a cattle train. Happening to put my hand in a vest pocket I pulled out a card. I showed it to the brakeman, and he said "It's the card of an attorney at law who lives in Oakland, only a few miles from where you are going." I said nothing. Sheer instinct had asserted itself and I was going to cross bridges only as I came to them.

In time I got to Oakland, went to see the attorney, and learned that I had a ranch in the hills and also got directions how to get there. That night I started, and in the small hours of the morning got off at a little town which was also the County seat, about a hundred miles from San Francisco. I saw the sign of a livery stable and went there to inquire. A short fat man, who looked like a Portuguese Jew, owned the place. He seemed to know me and all about my ranch. He agreed

to lend me a pack-horse and I started. Somehow I got there. A ranch in the hills. A place for the rebirth of a man. I looked around and saw a small vineyard clinging to the steep sides of a hill, a ramshackle cabin, hardly habitable, all around jagged peaks, precipitous canyons, and thick brush everywhere. Not a soul in sight, nor a house. Yet it was glorious. It was a bit of heaven to me. There I was in the very heart of the greatest mother of all—Nature. The staccato call of the mountain quail, a thrush somewhere in the wild lilacs burst forth into a peal of liquid melody, and almost under foot scurried rabbits and squirrels; not a hundred yards distant a deer flashed into view and melted in the brush. I breathed deep and forgot sleep, hunger, cramped muscles. I felt kin to every living creature on the place, every blade of grass. I walked to the cabin, pushed on the door—and pandemonium broke loose. Three dogs gave tongue, and the harsh, cracked voice of a man yelling. It was pitch dark inside, only the eyes of the dogs punctured the darkness, and I hesitated not at all, but drew the door shut. Still, I had been told it was my place, so, stepping behind a tree I waited, only a moment. The door opened a little, and a shaggy head appeared, a head which was almost human. A thatch of frowzy gray hair almost hid a pair of bloodshot, blinking eyes, and the bulbous end of a nose. It—the head—saw me as I stepped forth, and cracked into a grin, a toothless, gargoyle grin. A cackling voice greeted me: "Hello, Jerry, when did you come up?" The door opened wide and out came a man—sure enough—a man. He ex-

tended a hand. I shook it and smiled. Here was a man on the place supposed to be mine, and he called me Jerry, the same name they had called me at the hospital. Evidently he knew me. I must make believe that I knew him, too. "Oh, I just came up a few minutes ago," I said. "How's everything? You look fine. How are the dogs?" "Fine," he said. "Everything is fine. I have taken good care of things while you were away. The pups have started to hunt and they'll be as good as their mother. Come in. You hungry?"

I went in. The dogs gave tongue and scuttled under a bed. The old man started a fire in the stove and in ten minutes a coffee pot was boiling and some meat was cooking in a frying pan. A dog crawled from under the bed, sniffed my shoes, looked up at me, sniffed again, then—a strangled yelp, and that dog was all over the place. It licked my hand, stood up and begged, rolled on the floor in a frenzy of bliss—and the old man smiled and said: "She has recognized you. Wait till the pups come out. They are beauties." And they were. Not much on looks, but built for the chase; sturdy legs, wide paws, deep chested, lean flanked, heads which spoke volumes of intelligence, short-haired, the ideal type for mountain work. We ate, we drank; the old man out of a bottle. I was home. Sure enough I was home, but—how much of a home had I and who was the old man, and—an ugly suspicion began to take shape—who was I? What was it all about?

CHAPTER VII

A VINEYARD HEAVEN—EGG HOUNDS

I found out the old man's name by looking at some old letters while he was outside. That day we made a bunk for myself, cut some wood, and the old man showed me a side of meat hanging on the shady side of a tree. It was not beef, nor mutton, nor pork, but the piece we had for breakfast was mighty good and, at that time, I knew nothing of hunting seasons. That night we had a wonderful stew. The dogs ate all they wanted and Martin told me something. He did not know he was doing so, because three bottles which had been full before supper were empty now, and I had not touched a drop. Besides, my questions were discreetly put. I was wary, half suspicious of myself. And I learned:

About a year before I had appeared in the hills looking for homestead land. Someone had directed me to Martin, as being the oldest man around there, and knowing every foot of the hills. He had discouraged me from the idea of homesteading, and, being anxious to sell his own place, had offered it to me for a certain price. I had bought. A few days after buying I had disappeared. The next thing the old man knew, a lawyer came to see him and told him

I was in serious trouble and only money could get me out. The lawyer produced a paper purporting to be a power of attorney from me to him, and, on the strength of that, the old man had given him \$700.00 in cash and had taken a mortgage on the place for the amount. This mortgage added to the one I had given the old man at the time of the purchase, left me an equity of but a few hundred dollars. I went to bed that night and slept. I was tired, very tired. In the morning, I looked around and took stock. There were the acres of vineyard, about one acre of orchard, five or six cows, and a dozen chickens. The old man and I had a talk that day. He came right out frankly. He wanted me to release the place to him, as he really owned nine-tenths of it. I could stay, as a guest, and work the place. I thought it over. The place practically belonged to him, but I still held the title, and the mortgage terms were favorable. By selling the cattle I could work the place and hang on till crop time. Grapes were selling high, and that would give me a start. No, I would not turn the place over to the old man. I would make one desperate try. I told him that, and also told him he could make his home on the place as long as he lived. He got very angry and left. I pitched in. The vines should have been pruned long before then, but they had been neglected, and I did not know how to go about it. A neighbor from two miles away came and showed me how. Inside of one week I had the vineyard pruned and the cuttings cleared away. Then came the problem of plowing. I had no horses, no money to hire it done. It had to be done. I found

an old mattock in the house and started in! In five weeks I had that vineyard like a show place. The ground worked a foot deep, and not a lump larger than a walnut. And, dear reader, if you have ever tackled red "dobe" soil with a blunt mattock in a dry year you know the job I had. In the meanwhile, I had found something. The old man had left behind him an old rifle and some shells, I went out at three o'clock one morning to get some meat, and right behind the house in a patch of brush I found five barrels—all full—and a keg. I investigated, and—yes, yes, dear reader, you guessed it. There was last year's crop of the vineyard, made into juice. I was able to live by that for awhile. I don't drink at all, but I traded some of the juice for cartridges and got meat with them. Yes, my dogs and I got meat, and I traded some meat and got flour and lard. Sundays were set aside for foraging, and the pups got to know. The minute the old blunderbuss came off the peg there was joy in the camp. And they—the pups—endeared themselves in my heart forever. Once I gave the word, they were off. The old dog, their mother, in the lead, the youngsters going top speed, nose to the ground, searching for the trail and when they struck it, oh, boy, then I forgot all my troubles. The instant game broke cover, they would spread out, one up hill, one down hill, the old one in the middle, and their baying woke the echoes all around. Thick artemise brush, ravines, steep hillsides, it made no difference to them, and they never failed to bring the game within reasonable shooting distance to me. The least I could do was

to play fair to their efforts and kill the game with the first shot. I would do anything, give anything, to know who has those dogs now. The male pup I named Speedy—he was a blue streak; the female pup I named Finder, in homage to her wonderful nose.

Of course, they were inveterate egg stealers—all three of them. As soon as I found it out, I began locking them in my cabin at night, so as to have an even chance at the eggs in the morning. You see, there were no nests in the barn, and the hens just laid their eggs anywhere in the straw.

At break of the day I would throw the door open and it was then a grand rush to the barn to search for eggs. Of course, it was finder keeper, and it took only an instant for the dogs to seize, break and swallow an egg, once they spotted it, but I always managed to get a couple.

The system worked well until Boots figured out what the game was and told the pups about it. One fine, chilly morning I woke up suddenly to a medley of barks and growls; all the blankets were gone from the bed and the dogs were dragging them about the floor. I retrieved them and went to bed again, but the barking went on and, thinking some strange man or animal was about the place, I dressed and opened the door to look around. There was no one in sight, but the dogs streaked it for the barn. By the time I got there all the eggs were gone. The next morning I happened to wake up earlier than usual. I felt something tug at my blankets. I laid still. Suddenly there came a yank and the blankets flew off the bed and

the same medley of barks and growls as the day before. I retrieved the blankets. Also I caught the dogs one by one and spanked their hams good and plenty—but it was no good—they only squatted on the floor, with their snoots between their paws and their eyes told me things a darn sight worse than their voices ever could. The morning after that, Boots tried another way. She woke me up long before daylight by simply jumping on the bed and barking, then ducking like a streak under the bed. All right, all right, she wanted the pups to have the eggs; she thought fresh laid eggs were good for growing youngsters. I thought the same thing, so we compromised—I took a half day off and built a couple of egg nests where the hens could reach them, but the dogs could not—so we all had some eggs—so many per each, regardless of size. But down in my heart I kind of doubt that Boots entirely approved of the change. A couple of times I saw her standing on her hind legs right under the new nests—maybe trying to figure a way to reach the eggs—maybe.

CHAPTER VIII

A CHICKEN CHAPTER

There was also a small flock of hens on the place that gave fair promise of developing into a paying venture.

I traded roosters with a neighbor, and started saving all the best eggs. As soon as a hen became broody, she would get all the eggs she could cover in a new, clean nest. In a few weeks the barn and yard were alive with baby chicks and their mothers. They had to be watched, of course, for the hills thereabouts harbored all kinds of predatory animals, such as foxes, coyotes, weasels, skunks, and the like, and so I turned my cabin over to them. The oldest and wisest hen was given the detail of mothering all the chicks, while the others were turned back into the laying flock as soon as their own chicks were three weeks old.

And that old Barred Plymouth Rock biddy proved to be a lady and a queen. She never lost a single chick out of some six hundred she raised. The only trouble she had was due to the fact that the whole flock was forever trying to crawl under her. Of course, she wanted to give her own chicks first chance, but it was a hard proposition to keep the others away. Pecking at them did no good, changing her position was of

no avail, and for the first couple of nights, the cabin floor was an animated mass of scurrying, pip-pip-pipping youngsters making a grand rush for the bosom of the lone mother hen.

Of course I kept the place well heated and ventilated, so the chicks really needed no covering, but something had to be done to relieve poor Biddy of the hazards of the nightly grand rush. I built a rack two feet by one foot, and raised it six inches from the floor. The slats of the rack were half an inch wide and two inches apart, and that solved the problem. Biddy soon caught on to the fact that she was supposed to roost on that rack and she did. The chicks, of course, tried to get under her, but due to the narrowness of the slats and the space between them they could not stay on the rack, and in a short while they were contented to roost on the floor underneath. As they grew, the rack was raised and additions were made to it, until in June half the floor was taken up by the rack.

Through the day the doors were opened wide, and the whole flock could go in and out as they pleased.

I learned quite a lot from that hen and the chicks. She insisted on jumping in the feed box every morning and scattering the grain all over the floor where the straw was piled five inches thick. She wanted no softies in her brood, no sir, they had to scratch and hunt for their feed; and at break of day the whole caboodle of them had to follow her in the field in search of fresh meat, in the shape of insects and worms and the like. An occasional grass or garter snake would

throw the whole flock into a panic of fear, and it was then that Biddy showed her mettle. She would set up a vociferous protest and sound the call to arms; the old rooster would rush to the rescue and do battle right then and there with the intruder while the chicks squatted on the ground perfectly still and voiceless.

Also, the hawks began to take undue interest in the flock, and I found the remains of a few cockerels at various times to attest to the success of aerial raids. I set Boots on the job of watching out for that. She never caught a hawk, but barked plenty of them away. The old blunderbuss accounted for a few, too, and these I strung on a wire, in plain view of the others that might have been flying around near the flock.

One day Biddy laid an egg,—she had had her fill of the mothering job, so no more young chicks were added to her family, and in a very short time she ceased to be a mother, becoming instead a companion and a guide. The flock still followed her wherever she went, the youngsters still climbed all over her back whenever she squatted, but Biddy no longer clucked, nor did she coax the laggards that trailed far behind on the early morning foraging expeditions.

CHAPTER IX

CANINE COUSINS—NATURE'S NATIVE SONS—A WILD MAN
OF THE WOODS—A HOME-MADE HAIRCUT—MOVING
A RIVER

There in that hill country nature had full sway, hindered not at all by man's presumption and vaunted mastery. The little people that populated the woods and the brush and the creeks held to their natural tenor of life. They tolerated human presence, but they brooked no domineering, no servitude. They also tolerated the company of domesticated members of their kinds, but from these they exacted a full measure of homage and respect, as befittingly due to their own exalted state of freedom and their power to fight the battle of life without any such help by man as corrals or pens or stables or food. The domesticated ones always showed a sense of inferiority whenever they came in contact with the free and wild members of their kinds. Even the dogs did that.

I had long suspected that Speedy and Finder had wolf strain in their blood—and liked them all the more for it—but a family reunion I happened to witness late one evening proved it beyond doubt. I was making my way to a giant Sequoia where I had cached some meat the previous day; a mile or so from the house I noticed that the dogs had disappeared; I knew that

they had not run off on a game trail, for it was a cardinal point in Boots' hunting creed always to quest for trail *in front* of me. I grew curious and, just for the fun of it, decided to locate them without calling. I did not have far to go. At the bottom of a little gulch, hard by the trail, soft whining and the slight crackling of dry brush attracted my attention; in a few moments I located the whole group; Boots, Finder, Speedy, two half grown whelps and a superbly built full grown wolf. He was at that moment fully occupied in nosing around Finder, unquestionably his daughter, perhaps seeking signs of whether or not she was ready for motherhood. Boots complacently looked on and Speedy squatted on the ground, looking at the two young wolves, his half brothers. He had an expression for all the world like that of a country boy lost in rapt admiration of a couple of lads belonging to a circus troupe. His quest proving fruitless, the big wolf trotted over to Speedy, nosed him an instant, then went over to Boots. Finder, relieved of her father's attentions, approached her half brothers, wagging her tail and trying every way she knew to ingratiate herself. She actually rolled on the ground in front of them, but they stood aloof, as befitted future monarchs of the wild, and merely tolerated the fawning of a weakling who accepted food and shelter from man. The funny kink of the situation was that Finder could have licked the two together; she was bigger, stronger, and a holy terror in a fight. But she was simply obeying the law of nature; the wild specimen is at home in the wilds.

Very, very carefully I inserted a shell in the chamber; the old blunderbuss spoke twice, and I had the pelts of two half grown wolves. The old one streaked away at bullet speed; I did not want his pelt, for he was a fine specimen, highly fit to be preserved for stud.

There was a covey of quail which made their home close to the house; they mingled with the chickens at feed time and took their share of the grain. Never once did any hen or chick or old Hussar, the rooster, molest them in any way, but woe to the sparrow or finch or yellow-hammer that tried to pilfer a few kernels. The quail were natural inhabitants of that region, the others were only seasonal visitors. One mother quail—Lady Proudknot,—had even preempted a corner of the yard for herself and her brood; any grain which happened to fall there was their property, nor was she backward in declaring her rights. Once she even put Old Hussar to flight.

A big cat I had was always ready for a fight with any intruder—cat, or dog, or badger, or snake; but I found her a half a mile from home one day, quietly sitting in the grass, waiting for a wild cat of about half her size to get his fill off the carcass of a deer some hunter had shot and lost. I am sure my cat could have whipped the daylights out of that undersized wild thing if she had wanted to.

On at least one occasion I saw my twelve hundred pound Jersey Bull driven to utter rout and flight by a one hundred pound buck, who, perhaps, resented the presence of Majestic Lad, the bull, on his rutting grounds. The strangest thing of all was that my own

feelings were perfectly in tune with the way old Mother Nature has decreed for the Children of the Wild. If I hunted with rifle and dogs it was only because I was pressed for time; the real desire of my heart was to hunt in primitive fashion, barefooted and armed with a club. The finest fruit that grew on my place never offered as fine flavor as the handfuls of berries I gathered in the brush when hunting. Hawks, even as I killed them, stood higher in my esteem than any of my fowls.

The biggest rattlesnake I ever saw put up the battle of his life when he met me in his own bailiwick on a hot July day; he just fought me ragged. One tap on his head with the long forked stick I carried would have spelt taps for him, but he did not seem to care at all. Half a dozen times I held him pinched to the ground, each time he thrashed and leapt and coiled and struck at the stick, all the while keeping up a monotone of deadly rage with the rattles of his tail. Every time I released my hold he would dart at me and try to coil and strike; even when I worked him to the edge of a nearby spring and pinned him down in the water, hoping to cool his ardor, he churned the spring to a muddy puddle and struck at the stick, at the mud, at everything he could reach; and I was hot and sweating and growing tired, but could not bring myself to tap him on the head or drown him. Finally I picked him up in the fork of the stick and flung him down hill as far as I could. As he hit the ground, a hundred feet away, he immediately started racing around in an ever widening circle, and every little while he would

coil up and strike at the air.—I walked away, up hill. But some weeks afterwards I caught him in the yard scaring my chickens and I made a hat band of his hide right there and then. Eighteen rattles and a button he had; his hide spread nine inches at the middle of his body and looped my hat four times.

The primeval urge was incessantly clamoring within me. Scores of times it was only by the scantest margin that I refrained from reverting to the primitive; particularly on a day in May when a group of hikers from San Francisco invaded the hills where I made my home. One couple meandered towards my shack and I found them sitting on a log there. She was a creature of rare beauty; brown eyes which held the lambent flame of westering sun; her cheeks were petals of Ophelia roses and her half opened mouth was a lure for the gods. One slim hand toyed with the tendrils of a vine and her breast gently heaved from the effort of the climb. She sat on that log like a fairy sprung out of the Spirit of Spring; half turning to ease her seat, her limbs were the promise of . . . I knew not what. A little way from her sprawled a dissipated looking youth; eyes closed, panting like a spent pup; his face blotched and pasty. A streak of lightning broke loose in my body and for a space of moments I was tense and posed to spring at that lout, and claim the law of nature over the woman; but a stronger force seemed to counsel restraint and so I just walked out in the open where they could see me. She gave a startled cry; he opened his eyes, gave a yell and, in an instant, was on his feet and sprinting down hill

with the girl after him. I tried to calm them by calling but every time I shouted they put on more speed. The dogs rushed out of the cabin, saw the runners, and immediately gave chase; ye gods! the booming of boots and the yelping of the pups must have sounded like the crack of doom to the fleeing pair. I whistled to the dogs. They came back at once, but that pair kept on towards the road, the girl far in the lead.

As I stooped for a drink at the spring a little later, I thought I saw the reason for their fright. The reflection in the water showed a six months' growth of matted tangled hair, a month's stubble on the chin and a hairy chest on which hung a few shreds of what had once been a shirt.

A week later I went to town for salt and flour. The storekeeper asked if I had seen anything strange in the hills. "There is a wild man leading a pack of mauling dogs up your way," he said. "They scared the life out of some city people who were up that way last week; one of the men said that the thing sprang at him with bared teeth and a murderous club, then set the dogs on him. That man's daddy is a big gun and he threatened to send a company of the National Guard up there. If you happen to see anything strange in your neighborhood, notify the Sheriff, will you?"

Yeah, sure I would! . . . and I thought of that reflection in the water—; six months' growth of tangled, matted hair; white teeth gleaming through a month's crop of whiskers; blood-shot eyes; a hairy chest on which hung a few rags which had once been a shirt

. . . yeah! notify the Sheriff! Sure I would . . . NOT!

So the summer wore on; I had sold some calves and bought a team of ponies, some feed for them, and a pair of shoes for myself; I had been wearing gunny sacks wrapped around my feet for shoes. I also bought a safety razor but could not use it, my whiskers were too long. Later I traded half a gallon of juice for a pair of scissors. When I got thru using them and stepped outside the cabin my dogs flew at me, the chickens set up an awful squawk, the cat gave one yell and went up a tree. The darned things did not recognize me, but I spoke to them and peace was restored. Only I had a heck of a job to persuade the cows,—they were hill cattle and took nothing for granted.

The results of my labors began to show, the fig trees were a picture of thrift, the other trees were loaded with first class fruit also. Late in May I had traded venison hams for a box of dynamite and exploded half a stick between each pair of trees in the rows—; this had broken the ground to a good depth, and, together with the hand cultivation, it worked wonders. The apricots went five to the pound, the pears did well, but I lost the apples; I had not been able to spray them and they were all wormy. I realized that I ought to have more water, there was hardly enough to drink on the place, and only a mile up in the hills a fair sized creek was running to waste. I had the horses and a plow, I had the time, so I decided to move that creek. It was not a big job. It only required digging a channel a quarter of a mile long to divert the stream into

a dry creek bed which ran thru my place. I needed a little help, though, to get it done before crop time, so I went to town, arranged for two men to come to and borrowed some money on the crops to pay their wages.

At the same time I butchered a calf, and that was the beginning of the end; a disastrous end to the first battle my subconscious self was waging to get out of the shadow and gain the light of day. I have to revert back in order to explain that.

CHAPTER X

TROUBLESOME NEIGHBORS—A BOOTLEGGING BARBER

During the brief season which I had spent on the place, a peculiar condition had developed within me; a sort of a game of hide and seek. A cog was missing somewhere; an important cog; so vital, in fact, that instinctively I had devoted every bit of my energy to the task of replacing it. I mean that somehow I knew the chain of my life had snapped and I was adrift, but, perhaps by instinct, I had refused to acknowledge it openly to myself. I had been trying, instead, to work back by elemental means; by working and living and eating and acting in the manner of primitive men, or as near to it as possible. Instinctively, too, I knew that it was not a hopeless task, for as long as the will to live and ability to appreciate life remained, I would eventually emerge from the shadow of whatever bit of hell had fallen to my lot.

But that first effort was destined to failure. Human greed and the abysmal perversity of fellow men were to be the stumbling blocks in my path to resurrection.

A rancher about three miles down hill from me had a whole lot of land—that is, a whole lot of acres, but very little of it would grow anything. The rest was just rocks.

On the strength of that he ran a herd of about 125 head of cattle, some 20 horses and 250 goats. The direct result was that his stock overran the whole country, for miles around. No orchard was safe, no vineyard could be left unguarded for one day. Fences meant nothing to that kind of cattle—bred and raised in the hills, they had the agility of deer.

I went to town one day to get a few bucketsful of blood. The deer had started raising Cain with my vines, and cattle blood sprayed on the leaves is the only sure remedy. When I returned I found a bunch of cattle in my orchard, half a dozen fig trees destroyed, some pear trees stripped of their half ripe fruit, which was scattered all over the ground, and the cattle were feasting on the tender canes of the vines, loaded with bunches of baby grapes.

There was my only means of livelihood being trampled and destroyed. I knew at once whose cattle they were—knew I could collect damages if I could prove it in court, but in order to do so I had to hold the cattle or get witnesses. I could do neither. I had no corral to hold the cattle, and if I ran two miles to the nearest neighbor, leaving the cattle in the orchard, they would surely complete the wreck. So I drove them out, repaired the fence and went to see the owner of the cattle.

He was an old man who had spent most of his life in the hills, had always run his stock loose, and resented anybody's right to have a place where his stock could not go. He was surly, told me to keep my

damned fence in good repair and his cattle would be all right.

I went back home, but the next day I bought a couple of extra boxes of cartridges for the old rifle. I was not looking for trouble, but if it was brought to my doorstep—well, who the hell wants to live forever?

A few weeks before that, the Sheriff had smoked out a gang of bootleggers on that old man's place, and to everyone's surprise the head of the gang ostensibly hired by the old man to chop wood, was let off with only a seventy-five dollar fine.

Now, it was common knowledge in town that I had a few barrels of grape juice—some of it turned to wine—on my place. I had spread the news myself. Anybody who wanted some, had only to come and get it—free—and they came. County officials, town officials, professional men, even women, poor people, rich people, all kinds, breeds and colors. Some of them offered pay, but I was not selling it.

Only one gave me actual money, and I took it because I found out he was a stool pigeon, a barber by trade. One Sunday he drove up with his family and I gave them the freedom of the place—all the fruit they wanted, all the drinks they wanted. But he kept asking for brandy—fresh made brandy. I had none and besides I smelt a rat. A neighbor of mine had some. A poor, unlucky fellow fighting a losing battle in the hills, to save his wife's life. She had consumption. I knew he was hard up and a few dollars meant a lot to him. I told the barber I could get it for him.

We all went back to town and he showed me his home. The next day I brought the stuff down and left it at his home, went to the barber shop to see him, and sure enough, there was the Sheriff just getting out of the chair. I thought I saw them wink, but sat down for a shave. The barber wanted to know about the stuff. I told him the jug was at the house. He was disappointed, wanted it at the shop.

When I got thru he gave me some bills and I saw the Sheriff looking thru the window. It was a plant. Yet they could do nothing. Even if the money was marked there was no evidence, and, besides, I had lots of fruit for sale.

But it gave me food for thought. Why should the Sheriff set one of his stool pigeons on me? He had been up to my place a few times and had made himself at home in every way. I knew he was a white man and had some liking for me—why the plant? I found out.

The bootlegging gang that had been caught operating from the old man's place had flooded the town with booze, and knowing that I was giving everybody what I had found in the barrels, they spread the rumor that the whiskey sold in town came from my place.

I tried to correct the misinformation, and it made one more reason why the old man loved me not. And there was not, for miles around, one orchardgrower who had not been in trouble with that old man. He was obsessed with the idea that his cattle had a right to go wherever they pleased and if they destroyed the only means of a livelihood a man had—why, it was

just an accident, or more often it was the fault of the orchardist for not keeping a strong enough fence.

Oh, yes—strong enough fence—it would have needed a fence woven out of inch cable, and sixteen feet high, to keep out that kind of cattle!

CHAPTER XI

A FALSE CHARGE—I LOSE MY GRIP

And so, one day in June, I made ready to move that creek. To feed the crew, I butchered one of my calves. It must have been mine, because it was still sucking, and the cow it sucked was mine, it had my brand. Cows do not willingly adopt a strange calf, even if they lose their own. The bull takes care of that.

Three days after I had butchered it a gang of men, headed by the Sheriff, suddenly invaded my place and the Sheriff read me a search warrant. I was accused of having killed and used a calf belonging to that same old man.

You may kill another man's stock on your own place and be liable for a civil suit in court. If you kill and *use* it, its a felony. The Sheriff asked me whether I had killed a calf. I said yes, and showed him where I hung the meat. The old man and his nephew wanted to know where the hide was, and I could not for the life of me tell. I had thrown it to the dogs, so they could have what meat was on it, and kept no track of it. They all scattered, looking for the hide. The Sheriff saw that I had lunch ready and asked if he could have a bite.

A white man that. He might have been dry, but

he was not hungry. Yet he wanted to sit down and eat with me.

He knew I could drive a nail at fifty yards with a bullet. He knew I had been in the hospital for the insane; but he had his duty to perform and he was going to do it, come what may—but he also knew the kind of people he had brought to my place, and he wanted to save me from myself.

I did get nervous—but only as anybody might—on seeing the law come to my place, suddenly, and with a bunch of armed men. After a while the men came back with some pieces of hide they had found. The old man said he could identify his brand on it, but I never saw it.

His cattle had a mark on the dewlap, which no one could fail to see, if it were there, and which was also bound to be cut out or badly mutilated in the process of butchering.

I never saw that mark. That calf did not have it. Yet the old man swore it was his cattle and the justice of the peace upheld him. It was the same justice of the peace who had let the old man's bootlegging wood-chopper off with a fine of seventy-five dollars and the same day soaked a poor half-wit six-months in jail for having a half gallon of booze.

I was held to answer—I lost my grip—I went down. I heard again the creak of the hinges in hell.

CHAPTER XII

THE HINGES OF HELL—HOSPITALS AND HARPIES

Back home that night, I sat and tried to get back to earth. The old dog, faithful Boots, could sense the fires of hell lapping at me, and she crawled over and put her head on my knees. She whined. Then the pups came over, stood stock still—and they began to whine—and I slipped and slid and fell . . . I found myself back in the murderous wheat fields of France—then a twilight of stagnation—weeks—months—I never knew.

A big hospital, hundreds of lads who had been young but four or five years back, now old men, incredibly old; furtive looks in their eyes, or the flaming glare of some forbidden drug; listless bodies sprawled on cots or slumped on chairs. White coated attendants, white capped nurses. An air of appalling, soulcrushing apathy, or looks of incurable distrust. Wards full to overflow, tables crowded with men who could not eat, and a ceaseless parade of doctors, gorgeous in gold braid and buttons. Two bars—oak leaf—silver oak leaf—eagle—insignia which had led men, real men, into the jaws of hell and out. Insignia which had awakened the primeval urge to conquer in the breast of men, and had stamped the hall-mark of American

might on the goriest battlefield of all ages, and here patients sprawled on their cots or slumped in their chairs.

I could hear within me, a voice calling, calling from far away back, a million years back. The voice of my fore-fathers who lived at the dawn of mankind, who had to be wary of every living thing in order to survive. They who had to fight, barehanded, antagonists of immense size—and use their cunning in every move. Here in this place I found myself in the primitive jungle.

A little while back, three, four years, a conflagration had broken loose in the midst of men—a war such as past history had never known. People by the millions had forsaken all else for the sword. The battlefield was brooding over all the world. Not the battlefield of storybooks, not the battlefield of pomp and glamour. This was the battlefield of stench, of caked blood, of dirty bandages, lice, rats, eternal mud, and the smell of rotting corpses.

Groups of men in trenches, thin lines of men on the firing steps. Cold, rain, fog, darkness. A shot, somewhere near, gray phantoms leaping out of nowhere into the trenches. A pandemonium of rifles, pistols, hand grenades, the zugh of a bayonet driven home to the hilt, swift grappling with the raiders—the trench knife at play—a paroxysm of fury, the—silence—stifled groan—a gasp—hurried checking up for casualties—daylight, and the sensing of a charge. A charge to kill, destroy the figures you knew lurked in the trenches across the field. No individual hate—no personal

grudge. We were a pack of wolves—a million years back—and the pack in the other trenches wanted our blood. We were going to get theirs.

It was not the language they mouthed, not the rags they wore, not the land they came from. We cared not at all for that. They were a pack of wolves and we were a better pack, we were going to blow them to hell—and we were going to survive. Days, months of it—endless vistas of muddy grim lines of men——

Civilization—?—eigh! That's only a pap for the demagogues and the politicians. The shrill of a whistle, a platoon of olive-clad figures leaping to action—a rushing headlong charge—deployed for action, action to win. Each man to keep his place in the formation, to fire at a vital part of a fighting, advancing enemy. To fire with steady, deliberate aim. A man is leading you. A man who gave all his life to learn how to lead you—and you naturally follow that man into the jaws of hell, and if he falls, you carry on; his leadership still lives after he is killed. That's what made him a leader. He made you self-reliant; he made you a better rifleman than your antagonist; your bayonet is as familiar to you as your right hand; you KNOW you can knock the living hell out of anybody who wears a uniform different from yours——

And from a million years back the voice of primitive fore-fathers called and warned—and I grew wary in this hospital where I found myself.

Sitting on the grass one day; sunshine and summer. Cannas in bloom, verbenas trailing among tall stalks,

petunias, gladioli; a butterfly questing for honey; the drone of a bumble bee; summer and warmth; new life flowing gently thru mending body. I stretched out full length; haze of fleecy clouds, querulous chirping of sparrows—glorious, friendly summer—new life—

“May dear, I get the last shot today.”

“You will be going home soon, then?”

“Yep! another week; will be a blushing bride inside of a month.”

“You don’t say! who is the lucky man?”

“Oh, a dear boy I met at the last hospital where I worked; he is home now, waiting for me.”

“But, May dear, what will he think of the sores on your body? and are you going to tell him about you taking treatments for syph.?”

“No, he has never seen me and he ain’t gonna see me; the man is blind; some doctors say poisoned gas; other doctors say syph.; anyway he gets a hundred and fifty a month for life; gonna be in soft for the rest of my natural. No more uniforms for me, honey! no more of this here angel of mercy gag; and if the damned thing breaks out on me again, I can blame it on him. Well, I gotta be going, dearie, the old Doc is waiting for me at the Lab; ugh! I can taste that damn Salvarsan already! See you tonight, if I don’t get sick after the shot.”

I sat up; two women were walking away from a bench sheltered in the shrubbery, back of where I was. Two women, both employes of the hospital.

The drone of the bumble bee faded away; the flowers held charm and beauty no longer; sunshine

turned to a lifeless glare. I shivered, got up, walked away. Damn the war! Damn the hospitals! Damn the buzzards always ready to snatch the refuse of the battle field, and gorge their rotten bellies with it!

CHAPTER XIII

DOPE AND DEVILTRY—A FAITHFUL PHYSICIAN—A FIRM RESOLVE

A small farm, which formed part of the hospital grounds, offered the one chance of beating back the oppressing gloom of the place; a tractor and a flock of poultry gave me work and I pitched in. I tried desperately to keep aloof from the destroying influence of that hospital and had a moderate measure of success. I grew a little stronger; the will to live made itself felt again. From the innermost recesses of my soul came forth a somewhat timid but nevertheless lively tendril which gave fair promise of replacing, to a certain extent, the tree of life which the annihilating blast of war had wrecked.

I could not escape all of the chicanery and graft which ran riot in that hospital. It was barefaced and rampant.

One morning I happened to wake up a little before reveille; the first thing that attracted my attention was a figure hurrying from cot to cot, seeming to deliver something to each patient. Instantly there came upon me a feeling akin to the uneasy premonition which goes before a storm, or the instinctive sensing of danger one feels in the unseen presence of a rattlesnake.

The figure darted from cot to cot, furtive and noiseless. Quietly waking each lad, he would slip him something, till at last he reached the lad next to me. I laid motionless, watching thru half closed eyes; the man broke open a packet, counted several tiny, flat pieces of white paper to the boy in bed and whispered: "eighteen, see? eighteen,"—and passed on and out thru the door.

DOPE—. Dope being delivered to the poor wrecks of war who had contracted the habit thru free use of it by doctors who had no other way to alleviate pain and torture following amputations of arms or legs and the endless other surgical operations of the war. The relentless beast was keeping its hold on its prey. Hospitals were no sanctuary; guards and doctors were of no avail. The patients had a little money, their hospital pay, and the dope merchant knew only too well how to reach the proper person and pull the proper string.

I gave the alarm immediately after that man left the ward, notified the doctor in charge, offered to show him where each patient had concealed the dope, but he was a wise old Doctor. He looked at me, just looked at me, and said: "Jerry, you are crazier than hell. There is no dope in this hospital!" Yeah! if every bundle of dope sold in that hospital alone were a prong on a pitchfork, there would be enough of them to spear every yellow rat who, for a few lousy dollars, purveys to the craving for dope by lads whose resistance was shattered in the charnel house of war.

There was in that hospital a ward devoted to

venereal diseases in virulent stages; it was set somewhat aside from the others, extending well into the portion of the grounds reserved for farming. Most of the patients were receiving their regular hospital pay each month,—some eighty dollars, some a little more, a few as high as one hundred and fifty dollars. I had some work to do, late one evening, in the brooder house where I was caring for a flock of baby chicks. It was dark, so I followed a path that ran alongside that ward. Suddenly I stumbled on something; a muffled oath, the frightened squeak of a woman's voice, dark shapes squirming among the cabbage and the turnips. I fumbled for matches, struck a light, but someone knocked it out of my hand, fiercely muttering: "Beat it, you damn fool, get t' hell outa here!" I beat it all right, but in the flicker of the match I had seen plenty. It had been pay day, and the inmates of that ward were being loved out of their money by harlots from the nearby town.

I wanted to leave that place. The call of life became a more insistent clamor.

There were signs, true enough, that the Directing Powers in Washington had taken cognizance of the fact that the hospital was at the mercy of every kind of grafter and were, even then, taking steps to remedy the situation, but it seemed like the gesture of a Viking trying to halt the tides or the conscientious efforts of a toy puppy trying to scare a bull.

One could sense that somewhere at the head of the administration of Veterans Hospitals there was a Big

Man, a White Man, who knew of the evils and wanted to stamp them out, but it was also apparent that his hands were tied to a great extent and that he also had to toe the line.

They were building a cyclone fence around the hospital; they were installing guards at strategic points; they were restricting admission of visitors to the wards. But the cyclone fence was only four feet high; the guards were few and recruited from sixty dollar men; the restriction on visitors was only a gesture because corruption and greed found ready servants among the poorly paid lesser employees.

There was one man on that hospital staff who was really and truly white; Dr. Welcome Powell. He had a sympathetic heart and was loved by every patient who knew him. I went to him and asked advice; he said: "Sure my boy, the thing for you to do is to go, if you feel fit. I would advise you to ask for an indefinite furlough, go out and get work, if you can stick it out, well and good, if you can't, then come right right back here."

I followed his advice to the letter. On the day of my leaving I went to shake hands with him, and he asked if I had filed my claim for compensation. No, I had not filed any—did not want any—— "You are foolish," said Dr. Powell. "It's coming to you and you should claim it." I told him no; I had not gone to war for money. I did not even know to what army I had belonged, but anyway I wanted no compensation; that old Doctor rose on his feet, put his hand on

my shoulder and, almost crying, said: "Bless you, my boy! I wish there were more like you."

I left, then, carrying in my heart a firm resolve to hunt and hunt and hunt until once more I should find my real name, my people, my home.

CHAPTER XIV

THE LONG TRAIL BEGINS—A FOOTNOTE TO FAME—"HE
WENT IN WITH THE BOYS"

To carry out the plan which seemed to offer the only chance of finding myself, I began to travel—here, there, everywhere——. The minute I heard of an ex-service man from a certain outfit, I would pick up and go to him—he might have been my buddy, might know my name. It was a weary quest, meals were scarce and far between, at times my shoes refused further duty and the seat of my trousers developed a mania for going A. W. O. L. But I kept on looking.

I found five or six comrades who had known me on the battlefield, and they shook my hand and slapped me on the shoulder and made me feel like a human being again. They did not know my name, but all they could do they did. As far as official records and papers show, I was never a regular member of the outfit, but the spirit of comradeship rang true.

I had, perhaps, been detailed to that outfit from some other branch of the service. I had, perhaps, been inducted into the Corps on the battlefield and the temporary Headquarters where my papers were kept had been obliterated by an enemy shell. I had, perhaps—but what is the use of speculating. Things

happen, things are done on the battlefield which would not be done at home—in war time or peace. I had a natural gift of finding my way about—had filled hundreds of scouting details, could sling the lingo, above all, I was a fair to middling shot. My buddies knew—red tape doesn't interest them. A brother-at-arms is a real man to them—so they went the limit for me.

I found them in peace time as I had known them on the firing line—the same bunch, the bunch that never forgets. If ever a living example of true democracy existed that outfit is it—it forms the very soul of the corps from a carefree buck private to a gray-haired, supremely wise general. It is the sort of democracy which allows each and every component unit to retain his own individuality. I had seen proofs of it by the score, on the battlefield. For instance, one fine day in June 1918, a Cadillac car drove right up to the front line of the hottest battle going on at the time. A man sat in that car—the highest man in that part of the country—the Brigadier General—and all he wanted to know was why the next position ahead was not being taken. The Company Commander explained that a complication had arisen in the shape of an enemy battery of machine guns which seemed to fire from every angle, and he, the Captain, had thought it unwise to lead his few remaining men to sure slaughter and so had decided to wait for reinforcements for which he had sent. The General flung open the door of the car and jumped out. "Wait?" said he, "Wait, hell! Let's have it now." And he *went in with the boys.*

The Colonel commanding a regiment of that same brigade was put out of action by a bullet on the fourth day of fighting while on the very front line with his men. *That* was leadership in that outfit. A Brigadier General, a Colonel, right there, greasing the hinges of hell, together with the boys—and the ever roaring flames of hell cannot even singe the bond holding such men together. That is Democracy. I kept on searching and traveling—and always, within me, the struggle for rehabilitation went on, unabated.

CHAPTER XV

MOTOR MADNESS

This chapter should be written by Conan Doyle or Edgar Allan Poe or Balzac or some other genius with the ability to clothe plain facts or narratives with glamour and romance; but as this is my book, and the above named gentlemen are far away or dead, I shall do the best I can. And I write this chapter now, because what follows has a pronounced bearing on my struggle for rehabilitation.

At the wildest stage of the battle I have been waging for the past ten or more years, before I was sent to the Stockton hospital, in 1923, it so happened that a merchant dealing in automobiles got hold of me on a day when a little money jingled in my pockets. It could not have been very much, for the best he could sell me was a dilapidated wreck of antiquated vintage. It ran, though, and there was Jerry, by gosh, driving an automobile.

I have often heard the saying: One devil drives out another. Maybe that automobile merchant was a philanthropist in disguise and he wanted to give me something which would make me forget my other troubles; maybe he was just a plain skunk who took advantage of my mental condition and cleaned me out

of every dime I had; anyway, there was Jerry running wild thru the country, possessed of a pile of junk on four wheels and a burning desire to spread himself all over the earth in order to find out what had become of his name, his life, his folks, his home. If that car was like some of those I have seen since, it must have taken a lot to keep it up. The Lord only knows where else I went with it, but finally I hit California. There I fell in with a crowd who could actually perform the miracle of getting blood out of a turnip. Of money I had none, neither had I respectable clothes, but I had a car and one man in Southern California found a way to utilize that. He happened to have on his hands a half dozen cars which were obsolete; they were brand new, but the market was closed to them because the factory which made them had already put out a new model so much better and so different that no one in his right senses would buy one of the old models. Well, here comes Jerry, sailing into town with no money, no friends, no home; the wreck Jerry was driving had to be housed for the night, the garage of the man with the obsolete models happened to be the first one Jerry saw, so in he went. I have not been able to find out all the details of the transaction, but it is a matter of record that Jerry drove away from that town with a brand new car and a roll of greenbacks to boot. The Court Records which I have been able to dig up show only that I had agreed to buy the car at the market price, on the deferred payment plan; the dealer took my car in trade, also, he gave me part of my car's value in cash, applying the remainder to

the first payment on the new car. And so Jerry drove away with a new car, and a roll of money. The dealer had gotten rid of a car for which there was no market otherwise. My name, at that time, was not Jerry. I drove around, the Lord only knows where, till the money gave out, then found myself in a city where it was possible to borrow money on the car and still keep the use of it. I drove up to one such place, asked for a loan, got it, drove away; it was no small loan either, according to the Court Records.

The same stunt was performed a dozen times. I also traded the car in for another one which was up to date and kept on borrowing money right and left. Once or twice the car I happened to be driving caught the fancy of some speculator or another and they bought it for spot cash.

This thing went on for months. The Records show that I covered a couple of states, put up at hotels, Y. M. C. A.'s and other such places, never tried to hide; in fact my presence, even then, was mentioned in several newspapers of different towns I visited.

If the Court Records of the case are correct,—and I have no reason to think otherwise,—the police forces of those states must have thought there were half a dozen of me, for I gave a different name at each transaction, also a different address and some very fantastic information about the sort of business I was in, family connections, and the like.

Came a day, as the movies say, when the hand of the law caught up with me. I was brought before the Court, charged with a number of infractions of the law.

The Judge who heard all the evidence on the case *dismissed all charges*.

As far as I have been able to ascertain the charges were not dismissed on the grounds of insanity. They were dismissed because the parties who claimed they had lost their money thru my illegal borrowings, buyings, and sellings seemed to be as much at fault as I was, for the law requires them to do things, which they, either intentionally or otherwise, omitted to do. The very fact that the most superficial inquiry on the dealer's or lender's part would have disclosed that whatever name I gave at the time of the transaction was not my real name; neither was my title in the various cars valid enough to empower me to sell them or borrow on them militated in my favor in the eyes of the law. Maybe some of those gentlemen had good reason for not being too inquisitive. I have seen some of the drafts of the transactions; old man Shylock was a gentleman in comparison with them.

Anyway, the charges—*all charges*—were dismissed by a Court of Law.

These are all of the facts, as I have been able to ascertain by searching the Records of the Court and by interviewing attorneys and witnesses who were connected with the case.

One consequence of the affair was that the authorities and other public spirited men had the opportunity to see that everything was not right with me. The Judge who tried the case, the attorneys, the American Legion and others, interested themselves to the extent of having me examined by Doctors who knew their

business; it took the Doctors a very short time to diagnose my case as one needing prompt attention. I was committed to an Asylum for the Insane.

The official papers, of which I here reproduce a section, show in plain English that *no charges* were pending against me when I was sent to that Asylum for the Insane.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
IN AND FOR THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Affidavit of Insanity

In the Matter of John R. Talbot, an Alleged Insane Person. State of California, City and County of San Francisco, W. C. Sampson, M.D., being duly sworn deposes and says that there is now in said City and County of San Francisco a person named John R. Talbot who is insane and is so far disordered in mind as to endanger the health of person, or the property of himself, or of others, and that he, at DETENTION HOSPITAL in said city and county, on the 5th day of October 1922 threatened and attempted (see detail of Affidavit). Sent up to Detention Hospital by Superior Judge M. C. Roche for observation as to his Sanity (Advised by examining Physicians that he be sent to State Hospital for treatment) (has been acting irrationally while in Detention Hosp. (*Charges have been dismissed by Judge Roche*) That by reason of said insanity, said person is dangerous to be at large. Wherefore, affiant prays that such action may be had as the law requires in the case of persons who are so far disordered in mind as to endanger health, person and property. W. C. SAMPSON M.D. Subscribed and sworn to before me, this 5th day of October 1922. H. S. Jones, Deputy County Clerk.

Indeed I have been told that the Attorney who represented the creditors was the first one to sug

est that the charges be dismissed. My own Attorney was the one who arranged for an examination by Doctors who were specialists in mental cases. *He did that after the Court had freed me of all charges.* He, my attorney, was not obliged to do that; as far as his legal services were concerned the case was closed; but he happened to be a man of principle and he worked for my good even after he had completed the work he had been engaged for. After spending some few months in that Asylum, I came out in much better shape than I must have been when I went there. There was still a long and rocky trail for me to travel; I had still the task of finding my lost self; but I was better off to the extent that I was conscious of my actions and able to tell right from wrong. Never since, since I started on the upgrade, have I done anything which could be called or proved wrong in the eyes of the law. Temptations have been many, of course; bootleggers offered me jobs which paid plenty and were rich in adventure; dope peddlers sought to put me on their pay rolls; smart people, in other lines, thought I could work for them to mutual advantage, but all such offers meant nothing at all to me. I did not refuse them because of a sense of fear of the law, nor because I thought myself better than the people who offered me work in their line; I refused because some of my manhood, some of my training was returning to me, and I just did not care to be mixed up in any line of endeavor which required secrecy, dodging and graft.

CHAPTER XVI

SLANDER

That mixup I had with the Law, however, was to follow me around for many years; it was to form the tool by which politicians and their bootlickers were to make much capital for themselves; also it was to form the groundwork for a number of so-called charity organizations to blow their horns, chant their hallelujahs, and dig deeper into the public's pockets.

Yea! I was to hear more of that trial; it was to be a shadow following me everywhere with zeal and tenacity.

It seemed that a mysterious power had assumed a degree of authority over and beyond the authority vested in the Courts of Law by the Constitution of the United States; for, regardless of where I went, the workings of that mysterious power became evident as soon as I settled down at some hotel or private house. A whispering propaganda of slander and defamation would poison the atmosphere in my neighborhood; suspicion and distrust would show in the faces and manners of people who had up to then sympathized with my misfortune, and I would find myself badly handicapped in the search for the man who had been I. People were told that I was a crook, an impostor, a

convict, and these lies were poured out in a steady stream, in a matter-of-fact way, as Gospel truth. Old rumors were revived, embellished, magnified. And always these rumors and slandering lies were pivoted on the assertion that I had been arrested once in California; never by any chance was the fact mentioned that all *charges* against me had been dismissed by a Judge of the Superior Court. The system of the Dark Ages was put in full force again, as far as my case was concerned. The hounds of the Law, the Javert of Victor Hugo, the unrelenting wolf pack of the Russian Steppes were keeping their noses on my trail and they were to drive me from the haunts of men. They were unshakeable, ubiquitous, deadly, and cunning. As soon as the first inkling leaked out that I was writing a book, this book, their tactics changed; they put on velvet gloves and a sugary smile, I was patted on the back figuratively; I was given friendly hints and shaken by the hand, yep! but not a damned bit did they fool me, for I could feel the sharpened claws under the glove, and knew that these overtures were only feelers for a soft spot to plunge the knife in. I was told that only children and fools ever told the truth; I am no child; I have written every word of this book.

I nailed down one of the skunks at Williamsport, Pa. I was staying at the New City Hotel while searching for a fellow I knew. One evening, while sitting in the lobby, a man came and sat next to me. He opened a conversation by saying that he had just arrived in town; wanted to know if I were acquainted around the

place. I was not. Well, did I know anyone in the hotel? Yes, I knew one or two by name. By the way, did I by any chance know a guy who called himself Jerry Tarbot? I sat up and took notice. Yes, I had heard of him, not much good, was he? And that stool-pigeon gave himself away at once. "No," he said, "that guy is no good. He'll get put away, or sent out of the country pretty soon. He has put out a book giving everybody hell and we will get him for that." I was on the verge of asking him his name when the clerk came up with another man and said: "Here, Jerry, this gentleman wants to meet you. He is a newspaper man who had been hearing all kinds of stories about Jerry Tarbot." The stranger took in the situation at once and beat it for the door in a hurry. He had not even registered yet, so I was unable to get his name. On another occasion, a young lady who had been kind enough to give me some of her time showed a sudden coolness; to my insistent queries for the reason of the sudden change in her demeanor she said that her mother had heard that I was a bigamist and an ex-convict, and that, much as she liked me, it might compromise her social standing if she were to be seen with me any longer. The hell of it was that she knew those rumors were lies, absolute lies. I could cite a number of other instances, but it would serve no purpose, for after all, I am not the first one to have experienced the poison fangs of calumny. I am not a bigamist. I am not a crook. I am not a malingerer. I am not an impostor. Any man or woman who says I am is a wilful dirty liar!

CHAPTER XVII

THE-KNOW-IT-ALLS—FREAKISH FARMING

There was a phase of this struggle for rehabilitation that taxed for a time every bit of self-control I possessed; I mean the frequent meetings with the know-it-alls. I experienced varying periods when I was apparently normal in mind and body. For months, sometimes, I would look healthy and be able to speak on any common subject with clarity and cohesion of ideas. I could and did eat hearty meals and even was able to sleep; then it was a dangerous time for me. Some leather-headed moron was sure to pop up out of nowhere and point to my spells of apparent good health as a sure sign that I was permanently cured and everything was all right. A few times I caught myself arguing the point with such damn fools as those—and getting all worked up—but it was not long before I realized that the best plan was just to let them talk.

One pestiferous specimen of that breed seemed to derive a particular delight and a world of comfort from the fact that he felt symptoms and aches similar to mine. He even claimed loss of memory because sometimes he hunted all over the house for a pair of spectacles, which were on his nose all the time, also

because once he threw the potatoes in the garbage can and put the peelings in a stew he was cooking. Yet he drank an average of a quart of cheap booze each day and proclaimed to Heaven that he was a sick man, oh, ever so sick.

But the months and months of tottering on the verge of hell; the black spaces of time when the unceasing battle within me had reached the last trench and only a thin line of defense remained—the thin line of instinct—those months were mine alone. I sought no comfort nor help; there was none to be found; the battle raged deep, out of reach of human agencies. And such spells occurred with maddening persistence, especially right after some effort of mine to pierce the curtain beyond which lies my past life. I have developed an uncanny trait of knowing in advance when I am due for a relapse and then, perhaps as a sign of ultimate victory, a second personality rises in me, and stands, as if on the side lines, watching the fight. . . . A commanding officer, a Colonel, stood on the side line one day in June 1918, he stood on a little knoll and watched the men right in front of him do battle with the enemy; he was the fighting chief of a fighting regiment and he watched his trained soldiers simply raise hell with the foe—then a bullet whined and struck; struck him in the neck and, although he got over it in time, he saw no more of that fight. But the men he had trained won the battle. So, perhaps, the man who was I stands on the side line and watches the forces which were trained and developed in youth do battle with a persistent foe. A few side lights of the rocks

strewn on the upward path may give you, reader, a practical knowledge of the nature of my task.

I went to work for a rancher at plowing time in the Spring of 1923 at Marysville, Calif. He gave me a new plow and a good team of horses to work with, and I gave myself entirely over to the job on hand.

Being anxious to produce good work and plenty of it, I used to put a marker on the last furrow I plowed each day so that I could compare each day's work and figure ways of improvement. One evening, as I was putting up the team for the night, the old farmer happened along. He took a look at the horses and asked me whether the plow share was sharp. I assured him it was, but he seemed to doubt it, as the horses looked very tired. We went out to the field and there I saw that *I had been plowing the same furrow—just one furrow*, all day long. It was about three feet wide and just about as deep.

If that farmer had been a larger man than he actually was, I would not be here today. He was mad and I don't blame him either.

In 1924, during the summer, I took a job herding sheep a few miles out of Rio Vista in California. The work proved to be a good deal harder than I anticipated, for the flock I was given consisted of 1500 lambs which had been recently separated from their mothers. They were very restless and scary. If I dared relax my vigilance for even as long as an hour, they would scatter to the four winds—and it is really amazing how quickly a large bunch of lambs can disappear in a very few minutes.

I was determined to make good on the job, so I actually lived with them. One day I caught myself walking on my hands and knees and licking salt from the trough used by the lambs for that purpose. The Lord only knows how long I had been doing that.

CHAPTER XVIII

A MAGNETIC MAJOR—THE SUBCONSCIOUS MIND—PAGES OF PUBLICITY

In the summer of 1925 I was visited again by the spectre of the maddening years—the war years.

On a warm August evening my right arm began to throb—in two hours it swelled to the size of a small keg—the old enemy, poison gas.

Fairly crazy with pain, I found myself unable to get a doctor. Through the good offices of a white man, a man who had seen life—Doctor Long of the Y. M. C. A.—I gained admission to the Letterman General Hospital in San Francisco.

The doctor could not give me time to undress, even, had to operate at once to save my arm——

In a week, I was out of danger and being cared for. There were relics of the battlefields all around me—in that ward—boys who had left a leg in France, boys who had but one arm and boys lying on cots who would never walk again. Yet there was a healthy, wholesome atmosphere in the place. I mean there was a feeling of courageous bearing of burdens—no furtive looks, no guarded whisperings—no smouldering hatred, and in short order I knew why. This was a real hospital—real doctors—and they wore uniforms and

insignia of rank, which somehow seemed to fit them naturally. The Doctor in charge of the ward I was in, the surgical ward, was the most magnetic he-man I have ever seen in that line. If he told a patient something, that patient believed him implicitly. There was no hesitation about diagnosis—and never the most minute detail omitted. Many times I saw him peel the rubber gloves from his hands in order to feel the edges of a cut with his bare fingers and many times I saw that Doctor—a Major he was—stick his nose close to a healing cut, to make sure no complications were lurking under an apparently satisfactory surface.

And the nurses—yes—they too were the real thing. Strictly business, they were—but always with cheery, wholesome smiles. Morning, noon, evening and all thru the night, there was always a nurse to carry out the doctor's orders.

It was no trick at all to close one's eyes and visualize those doctors and nurses in the real business of the Army—war. I'll wager my chances of Heaven that not all the din and roar of the fiercest battle—not all the thunder of the heaviest barrage—could take that Doctor's attention away from his patient. He had all the manhood, the spunk, the go-get-it of another Major I knew—the one who had led a certain battalion into a certain woods in France——

But my luck did not hold. In a few days, I was told I had to get out—and besides, I had to pay so much a day for the time I stayed in the hospital.

That hospital is strictly for men in actual service—

civilian veterans may be admitted and cared for only by a card of admittance issued by the Veterans' Bureau, which in that case pays the expenses.

I had several sworn affidavits from comrades of mine who had seen and known me on the battlefield, but they were not enough to entitle me to hospitalization, not even for poison gas, contracted on the battlefield in the service of my country.

Well, I paid, and I got out, still somewhat wobbly, but I got out—I had to. During the next few days I did feel a temptation to figure out what sort of point of law could possibly bar a disabled veteran from hospital care when the country was giving millions and millions of dollars for the relief of just such veterans, but had to give it up. I never did know much about law, and besides the only point which counted on the battlefield was the point of a bayonet, and by using or trying to use that point I had made an outcast of myself. So I gave up trying to figure out points.

In Los Angeles, California, I met a doctor who volunteered to help me. He has the power to reach the sub-conscious mind, and he put me to sleep and worked on me. He worked like a trojan, and he got piles of information out of me, but all mixed up. The years of wanderings after I came home, the silent unceasing struggle of my inner self to overcome the handicaps, the barriers to a real life, had reduced me to a state where no human help could untangle the snarled thread.

But, in a way, that doctor helped. He cleared away the weight of a dead incubus from my soul, and

brought to light a new battery of guns with which I might fire a number of rounds and keep in the fight—and the newspapers took up the fight.

They gave me pages and pages of publicity, so the people might know the war was not over entirely and one soldier was still groping his way to light and life, and one mother somewhere in the land was still burning the candle at the window.

Also the different viewpoints of the press at large and the different angles of my case which appealed to it formed by themselves a liberal education.

The nature of the write-ups I received was always strongly suggestive of the general tone of the particular publication. I mean by this that my fix was always made to appear in the same light as the rest of the printed matter which went to make up the newspaper. If it was an afternoon daily, it gave my case a tinge of quixotic adventure; if it was a tabloid newspaper, it splashed me with maudlin sentiment; if it was a morning newspaper, I received the vigorous go-get-it assistance I needed in the shape of straightforward, impartial analysis of the whole thing; and if it happened to be a newspaper catering largely to the working class of folks, then ah, then, I found myself to be the hero of the day—the lion of the hour.

Also, one or two habitual scandal mongers tried a few times to dub the whole thing as the figment of an overwrought imagination—I beg leave to cite a paragraph or two from different examples:

Phila.: LEDGER.

"I am not married," he says. "I am not the type to marry as young as I was when I went to war.

"A girl somewhere?" He is not even serious about this. "No, not engaged, or anything like that," he says. "I was too young. But my mother is alive," he adds, and he is wistful and a little stubborn.

"When you look first at 'Tarbot' you think 'A Frenchman.' His hair is black. His eyes dark hazel and rather somber. His face has lines that are not quite melancholy and worry, but that deepen into strain when he talks about his mother. He has only a trace of an accent. But when he broke into excited talk with Spang, who is the last man to recognize him, he talked like a Frenchman. His rapid, excited flow of talk was almost unintelligible. It sounded more like French than like English.

"But he says no. Not French. He says it so quickly and so determinedly that the listener thinks he must be doubtful himself. But he says he thinks his father is French and his mother Irish.

"He remembers battalion movements before that battle of Belleau Wood. He told of secret moves that only a man of the sixteenth or the twentieth company could possibly know. He thinks he wandered on after the battle until he was picked up by Sixth Regiment men, for it was a Sixth Regiment man who cut off the lap of his left cheek that was hanging to his face and gave him treatment. 'Billy Beach,' he said, 'I found him in California, and he remembered me.'

"When people question his having gone to war, he says, 'Give me an examination in scouting, in dispatch riding. You can't know the tricks of scouting if you haven't done it. I was a field scout. And I was a dispatch rider.'"

From the Akron TIMES-PRESS

"At the Colonial Theatre Monday night, Jerry stood beneath the revealing spotlight—his face lined by the loneliness that is his. A little smile played over his features as he turned from side to side, for Jerry, down in his heart, expected that someone in the audience would rise and say, 'Jerry, I know you.'"

"For Jerry's hopes cannot be crushed. There is no failure for him.

"Then, as the crowd sat quiet, there was pain in his eyes, and he returned to his seat."

Los Angeles RECORD

"Tho he walks in a Valley of Forgetfulness, where dank undergrowths have concealed memory, both of joy and sorrow, he would scale the heights again, and from the Mountains of Knowledge gaze back into his sealed past."

WALLS ARE STEEP

PLAIN DEALER, Cleveland, O.

"But the walls are steep, the valley is long and sunken. And tho for eight years Jerry has walked

midst its terrors, the Sunshine of Memory has pierced its dense clouds wanly and infrequently.

"No home, no memory of mother; his past a blank upon which erring fancy traces thoughts of the cottage, the girl, the joys and sorrows of the Life That Might Have Been, Jerry struggles on."

STRENGTH OF SPIRIT

N. Y. EVENING GRAPHIC

"Denied the help of the government which, tho he ought to preserve it, can give a nameless waif nothing, he does not give up. Weak of his wounds, despondency he does not know. The strength of his spirit supports his weary bones, and the unquenchable fire of the hope eternal drives him on—on—on."

CHAPTER XIX

MOTHER-LOVE AND MOCKERY—FEEDING THEM FLAGS—
“WHERE ARE THE GOLD-STAR FATHERS?”

I found that, although I was lost, I was not forgotten. Mothers who had lost their boys in the war offered me a home, money, care, comfort and I knew—I saw the hunger in those mothers' hearts, the hunger for the boy who had fallen on the murderous wheat fields of France, and in the unfathomable depths of mother love they visualized my own mother, perhaps alone and old and ready to pass on, but desperately hanging on until her boy came home.

I really believe that I owe whatever progress I have made to my occasional contacts with the mothers of America. I mean those mothers who had really and truly understood the annihilating effect of the war on their sons.

A patrician lady of the utmost refinement and culture found me when I was in the throes of kicking myself free of the miserable influence of charity hospitals and mawkish sensation hounds. She asked no questions, but immediately made provision for me to receive actual means of subsistence and I spent some few hours with her without uttering more than a dozen words while she spoke hardly at all. But she gave me

those few hours, a wealth of steady, positive assurance which stood by me in the discouraging moments of near relapse and threatening oblivion. Shortly after meeting her, I found out she had two sons at home—both disabled in the war—and she was spending large sums of money for their care, rather than see them go to any hospital where the amount and quality of care given them would be measured only by the salary received by the personnel employed there—and the salaries are never of a size to attract or retain the best of anything near the best talent.

One little mother brought me flowers on Mother's Day—each carnation a flaming red one. It was a year afterwards that I understood why. She had heard of me and she came a long way—one hundred miles—to bring me red flowers on Mother's Day, for she knew, as all mothers must know, that the thing I needed and wanted above all, was a friend I could trust. The only such friend in my case, at that time, would have been my own mother—so she brought me flaming red carnations to tell me that my own mother was not dead—whether or not her body had passed away.

But like all things human, even the pure, clear light of motherhood's sympathy and ministrations was not immune to the sly attacks of commercialized welfare. I saw a group of Gold Star Mothers duped into forming an organization with a name similar to an auxiliary of a world-war-born veterans organization, and, under the guidance of professional charity workers, these Gold Star Mothers lent themselves to a grotesque exhibition of softening, devastating, slushy sentiment.

They lined up the boys in the hospitals—lined them up in military fashion, and amid speeches and hurrahs presented them with a Flag, and fed them cakes and candy and fruit right after the patients had had their regular supper. Among the boys were some who would have given their souls for a decent pair of shoes or a pair of pants which would have enabled them to go for occasional walks away from the hospital and the deadening influence of it. Moreover, they were fed up on flag presentations and reverberating speeches.

They meant well—those kindly, sorrowing mothers only they had fallen easy prey to a mistaken sense of kindness.

The mystery I have not been able to fathom—why were there no War Fathers—fathers who had had a boy killed or disabled or in the war at all—who would ever come to a hospital and mingle with the lads and lend by their presence the manly feeling the boys needed more than anything else. There were men's organizations, true enough, that gave shows and rides and such, but it was always done in a cut and dried manner,—the human touch was always missing.

The explanation may lie in the fact that perhaps a man cannot stand for the hokum and ribald mockery practiced on the disabled veteran under the guise of organized help,—while a woman finds the inherent strength and courage to wade thru the sewer of chicanery surrounding the sick veteran in order to reach him and bring what comfort she may.

At just about that time fortune smiled. I met a fellow,—he remembered me,—he had been the man

who gave me medical aid the last time I was brought in from the battlefield; and he told me where some more of our buddies could be found. I went where he told me and found them.

Should I live a million years, that day will live for all time. It was a home-coming for me. They did not remember my name; I did not remember theirs; but that did not matter at all. We had chow, we had drink, together we lived again the old days; the strong healthy days of training in rest billets; the maddy, hectic days of trench life—and we cleaned rifles and counted ammunition and inspected equipment. When I left there, I carried away a new confidence in myself, a fortified resolve to keep on and, like a promise of better luck, the refrain of a favorite song kept recurring in my mind.

“There’s a long, long trail a-winding.”

Yes! a long trail, leading somewhere!

CHAPTER XX

A DESERT INTERLUDE

At times there came upon me a sense of futility; a feeling that a sudden exit from life, a plunge into the realm of shadows, would, perhaps, be the best way out. Unconsciously, during these spells of depression, I sought the bosom of Nature, mountain tops or the sandy reaches of the desert. A particular stretch of desert afforded me solace and strength on many occasions; it lies between El Centro, California, and Yuma, Arizona. There is a highway which spans the distance between the two cities, that is, a highway of sorts. At the best only a trail marked by wheel tracks for the first twenty miles, it is completely obliterated by the frequent sand storms which form ever shifting ridges and hills. The last twenty miles are covered by a plank road, built and maintained by the State of California, but even this stretch is often obscured by deep drifts of sand and is very difficult to follow. The world at large calls that region a desert; it is nothing of the kind. There are innumerable varieties of flowers, trees of many species, shrubs and brush and grass; there is also animal life in abundance. A man who is not too effeminated by civilization and artificial living may find there means of subsistence for as long a period

of time as he cares to stay. Of the many varieties of cactus which grow there half a dozen, at least, supply water in usable form to a thirsty wayfarer; their fruit also is highly palatable and good. Kangaroo rats, if skinned and cleaned right after the kill, then wrapped in a handkerchief or leaves and buried two feet deep in the sand for twenty-four hours, make delicious eating; also young prairie dogs, desert quails and, in a pinch, gopher snakes. If you know the signs, you can find water by digging a few feet deep at the right places.

Night time, especially on moonlit nights, is a phenomenon of unsurpassed beauty and serene splendor in the desert; there is almost the visibility of daylight, made mysterious and fascinating by the glimmer of stars, and beyond the undulating outlines of sand ridges the fantastic shapes of desert-tree branches can be seen.

As you go along you learn the ways of desert life and how to adjust yourself to it. All the camping equipment I ever carried consisted of a strip of canvas two feet wide with pointed stakes fastened to it and spaced three feet apart for the entire length of twenty-five feet; also a corn knife, a pocket knife, a cooking pot, a '22 rifle with shells, and what clothes I had on, with plenty of matches in every pocket. One or twice I remembered to carry a small sack of salt.

The strip of canvas forms a most efficient barrier to crawling desert life, such as rattlers, tarantulas and the like. You must guard against these, especially the kind of rattle-snake called the side-winder. He is

of nocturnal habits and that makes him all the more dangerous, for if you sleep on the ground he is apt to come upon you while you are asleep and some little, unconscious movement on your part will most surely make him sink his poison fangs into some part of your anatomy. He is a bad customer, far better dead than alive, at any time, at any place. The canvas placed upright, in a circle, will stop him; at least that has been my experience. Several times I saw his peculiar track all around the circle of canvas and on four different occasions I clubbed as many of them to death, as they reared their ugly heads to peer over the edge of the protecting circle.

As a rule, I slept in a hole dug out of the desert floor,—a foot or so deep and three feet wide, with every stitch of clothes off. A blanket of sand several inches thick afforded ample protection; it seemed also to draw out a lot of the poison which contaminated my body at that time.

Once a desert fox nearly left me stranded. He found the cache where I had buried two kangaroo rats, some snake steaks and a prairie dog, and of course he dug them out and made away with the whole parcel. The next night I laid for him and he came but would not approach near enough to give me a shot; that little devil seemed to know to a nicety just how far away he had to keep from me to be safe; always just out of range, he kept edging away. If I ran so did he; if I slowed down or stopped, he did too. The chase kept up for some time; when I gave it up and tried to retrace my steps I found that I could not see my foot-

prints, and I had not the slightest idea of the direction in which I had been traveling. The only thing to do was to wait for daylight. When I found my camp I also found that the fox had led me in a circle whose farthest point was not more than a quarter mile from the hole in the sand which I called home. If I had gotten panic stricken or bull headed and started to wander around in the night the Lord only knows what the end would have been.

After that experience, I always laid a sock or a handkerchief on the mound under which my meat was buried.

Nor is there any lack of human companionship if one wishes for it. There are two water wells dug and kept by the State of California along the road and nearly all the tourists who travel that way stop for water. There is also a building at the beginning of the plank road and a man lives there; the building is used as headquarters for the men and teams who are frequently sent out to dig the plank road from under the piles of sand blown on it by the wind. That building and its keeper had to experience, at one time, a taste of life such as one would consider extremely improbable in the middle of the desert. Two men and a young woman sought shelter there one night; there was only one bedroom in the place; the two men slept in the barn. A week or so after that the poor keeper had to be taken to a hospital for a series of long and painful treatments.

Yes! a strip of canvas and a hole in the sand are

safest from poison snakes, both the crawling ones and those who walk.

Sometimes I lived in the desert a week, sometimes a month. Always, when I left, my health was better, my weight had increased and all traces of discouragement had left me. Once more I would go out to buck the line or rather to endeavor to shift the machinery of time into reverse.

CHAPTER XXI

SUPERNATURAL GIFTS—"HOW DID THE DOG KNOW?"

Due perhaps to the subnormal condition of my whole being, there came into my life an uncanny ability to understand creatures which are usually classed as belonging to the lower strata of creation, and also phenomena which are sometimes called supernatural, sometimes queer, sometimes just strange—depending largely on the observer's capacity of comprehension. There are other people who have the ability to understand these things—more or less—and quite a few make a living of sorts because of it.

The supernatural gift with which some people claim to establish contact with the dead; the apparent ability of a person to guess correctly a man's thoughts or read the past and future; the extraordinary facility with which certain individuals handle, train, and capture animals is nothing but the manifestation of subnormal body and mind.

My own experience and the experiences of some of my friends prove it.

At one time, not very long ago, I needed only to see a person to describe his character instinctively. In fact I gained some small reputation as a clairvoyant among those who saw me dissect a man's or woman's

past and present quite correctly. But I cannot do it now. At the time when it was easy for me to do it my mind was just beginning to emerge from a nebulous stage—it was just beginning to coagulate and consequently was very receptive to the mental and nervous emanations of the people whose past and present I was asked to analyze. Just as surely as my own brain began to regain the qualities it had lost thru some cataclysm or other and started to harden in a new mould, the mental and nervous waves of other people lost all power to register on me.

I have seen the dead and I have talked with them; that is, I have seen and talked to people I had known in life long after they had died. But it was no ghost seance, no miracle, no supernatural manifestation. At a certain stage of the physical resurrection of my body and mind, I was in desperate need of finding some man or woman who could give me sympathy and support. Nothing else mattered to me. I had to make contact with certain men or women, so I actually hypnotized myself into the belief that I had really found them and spoken to them long after they were dead.—But I cannot do it now.

I was driving thru a Northwestern State a couple of years ago, and happened to stop at a ranchhouse for water. The moment I stopped the motor,—even before I opened the door to alight—a huge, magnificent dog leaped from the porch of the house and fairly went crazy with excitement. He ran half way to the car, then actually crawled on his belly the rest of the way. When I got out and patted him on the head he fawned

like a puppy. The rancher came out and, like all western people, roared a friendly greeting—also shouted to the dog to lie down. When he saw the way the dog was acting he was astonished and told me that never in his life did he expect to see that dog make friends with *anybody*—friend or foe of the house. The dog had acquired a well earned reputation as a killer, and now, as the rancher put it; "There he is, acting like an old woman with a new baby." But I know he would not act the same way now.

While working for a farmer in Pennsylvania I was told to harness a team. Not having been in the barn before, I harnessed the team nearest the door. When I led them out the farmer nearly had a fit. "Get away, get away!" he kept yelling. "The gray! Look out, look out! he'll kill you!" but the gray stood there calmly as I held his bridle. The farmer subsided a little and said: "Go ahead then, hitch them to the hay-rack." I did so, and drove the team all day. The gray was much the better horse of the two. At supper I learned that for the past six months no one had been able even to put a hand on that horse. Next morning, while I fed the hogs, the old man went to harness the team and the gray nearly killed him. I went to the barn, harnessed him and worked him all day, and he behaved like a pal. The old farmer had raised that horse from colthood, and had been as kind to him as to the rest of the stock. But I doubt whether I could handle that grey now.

A boy I know well used to walk up to any rattlesnake and pick it up—even chase it if it tried to glide

away and was never bitten. He, too, was trying hard at the time to redeem his body and mind from a bit of hell which had befallen him. Two years later he nearly went west when he was struck several times by a rattler he tried to handle. He had been away to Colorado for a year or so and had become almost well—then went back to California and by an almost fatal experience found that in regaining his full health he had lost the ability to handle rattlers. I could cite a number of other cases.

Of course, being neither a doctor nor a scientist I am not able to say what physical changes occur in a person who is sick; glands may cease to function; certain internal juices may not be produced in the right quantities; nerve centers may become partly paralyzed by lack of proper nourishment; the system may be unable to throw off toxic elements continuously forming in the body; vitality may be lacking to replace spent tissues with new, healthy cells. A million things may be out of order and any of them tend to weaken the structure of the body. A man who is literally fighting for life is bound to emanate certain subtle odors, to radiate low or vitiated waves of vitality, and in this way animals and creatures which are lower in the scale of creation are able to know at once that the person before them is too preoccupied with his own battle to be mean or domineering or intent upon evil towards them.

CHAPTER XXII

LITTLE VOICES FROM THE PAST

Roaming thru the hills one morning on a June day, I came upon a fallen log and sat down. A furry piece of swift motion peeped at me from a nearby bush—a young chipmunk. He was aware of the subtle quality about me which inspired the friendship and confidence of all sorts of wild animals. I watched him and he eyed me intently for a minute. I sat stock-still. The youngster moved—advanced a little—sat up,—moved a little nearer,—sat up again. I started to move my arm, to hold out my hand—immediately he fled. Again the same performance, and again; then I understood, my movements were too sudden and swift to suit his sense of security and when he approached again I remained quiet. The youngster came, and came—in a moment he was scurrying away with a peanut I had managed to place on my knee, and the game went on for an hour.

Suddenly I knew—the long submerged “I” was trying to come to the surface, my own life, my past—willing and eager to come to me. In my unconscious frenzy to find it, I moved too quickly and it scurried back to cover. Years of rubbing against the seamy side of life had made the real “I” wary and suspicious and

it distrusted me; perhaps it had been led into a morass of quicksand and left to extricate itself.

And I remembered another thing. One of the pups at the ranch in the hills had been soundly thrashed by his Mother one day for violating a rule of the chase—he had started chewing at the game right after the kill. At meal time that night the poor pup had displayed a most pitiful state of uncertainty. Here was food and he was hungry, but he remembered the thrashing, his mother was at the pan, and the pup did not know whether the storm had blown over. He would advance a step—wag his little stubby tail—whine—sit on his haunches, ears drooping, and howl—then run away. The same thing over again—and then a glad little yelp and a rush for chow. The mother had lowered her ears and wagged her tail. That little skit came back to me while I watched the chipmunk.

It had struck a responsive chord at the time, but the vibration of knowledge could not pass thru the fog of physical weakness and I had missed its significance. Still, it had registered, somewhere, and now it came to life—the little bruised pup. The “I”—the young “I” bruised in the grind of stark destruction, was watching for a sign of relenting by the other “I,” the “I” who had been the leader, or the driver, to a bit of hell, from which return had been cut off for a number of years.—Yes,—I saw.

Both were *ME*. I was both—but one part of me had led the other part of me into hell, and had been unable to lead it out again. Somehow deliverance had come, and yet one part of “I” distrusted the other part and,

though anxious for a reunion, was wary. I knew——

Several times I had felt as if I were on the road to recovery, and had tried to rush matters—the wounded “I” had fled. I took an oath, sitting there on that log, to let nature work in her own way: to rush no longer, to allow no one to rush me in any way for anything.

I kept on traveling, in between times I worked so I could eat, and somewhere the sun began to shine. I know that I am in my homeland, and somehow I know that my mother is still living at the time this book is written. How I know it, I can’t explain, but I know. It may take me a long time to find where she is and I may be too late when I do find out—but no matter—*she* gave what thousands of other American Mothers gave.

And—the trenchant melody of an atavist call broke thru the enfeebled armor of artificial life. For generations back my people were farmers. I know this as I know the sun rises in the east, although I was brought up along entirely different lines. I have definitely learned that I attained moderate success at schools of high standing and had begun a mechanical career with very propitious signs of achievement—have found incontrovertible traces of myself as a machinist foreman at the age of 26 or so. Yet when I emerged from the retroversion to brute which had held me for seven years, I found myself entirely devoid of urge or desire for things mechanical. I was thoroughly at home in the midst of a flock of poultry or an orchard of fruit trees.

The language of a tree, from seedling to maturity,

has no mysteries for me, and I easily understand the feelings and emotions of the animals most people call dumb. I can produce more good fruit on a given number of trees and get more eggs from a given number of hens than the average orchardman or poultryman.

My people had been farmers for generations, and, after the war had blasted out of me the training for city life, I found myself loving the same things they loved, longing for the same mode of life they had lived. Nature, the greatest mother, sounded the call to a new, contented, fruitful existence.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE OBSTINATE BARRIER—THE BOY IS MYSELF, BUT I CAN'T CATCH THE NAME

But always when I try to fling back the obstinate barrier which hides the real me, I find myself confronted by a certain scene enacted years ago—a scene in which the gentleness of springtime mingled with the grotesque postures of rotting corpses, and radiant flowers on the trees competed with the smoke of cannon and rifle. I see the staring, unseeing eyes of my comrades and the pitiful huddled heaps which had been our foes in life but in death were brothers also. Try as I may there is no going back to what lies beyond that scene.—Perhaps it is outraged nature—perhaps violated youth, stunted suddenly in its growth and standing on a horizon where cherry blossoms are smothered by the fumes of battle.

Somewhere in France there is a grave which bears the name of the man who was I. Under the cross which marks it are buried, probably, a few shreds of flesh, and perhaps a piece of uniform, given my name because my comrades missed me and because the pitiful fragments needed a name. And there it lies—the name I cannot pluck from behind the obstinate barrier.

A truly mephistophelian satire, this border-line life,

—Here I am with the same component parts of my body as I had before the War—living among the same race and class of people I belonged to before the War—talking the same language I always did, and yet I am a total stranger in my own country. I must have been the same *hombre* in France as I am now—the only new thing I have is a grafted cheek—but I can't reach that *hombre*. I can't grab that man who was I.

Like a tantalizing weird Will-of-the-Wisp the life that was flutters by. Suddenly from nowhere appears a face sweet and old, with an all-compelling appeal. A brave smile on thin, weary lips—a halo of silver hair—then suddenly it fades away. Some day, I know I will meet that face again in life.

Again, a distant flash of lightning on a far, lowering horizon; almost the feel, in my hand, of mechanical instruments, tools with which to fashion cogs in the wheel of life.—Huge ribs of steel gradually cover themselves with long, broad plates and the hull of a ship takes form. I can even hear the fussy pit-pat of auxiliary engines and the vague, muffled roar of the riveting hammers.

Crowds of men cheering lustily, a lad pitching a ball—and, like the scent of long dried cypress leaves, there surges a feeling of what might have been youth years ago. And the crowds of men cheering—they shout a word, a name, but distance dissipates the sound and I can't catch that name.

Somewhere—a green field of corn and a brook meandering thru a pasture dotted with cows—the figure of a man walking towards me, his lips are moving and

there is something in his hands,—Yes, I know the man—old nigger Joe—and he is calling my name, but a grotesque whim of fate robs his voice of sound, and before he can reach me—he, too, fades away.

Slender spires and well kept lawns. Halls fairly alive with eager youths, and a tall, kindly figure holding a book. He is reaching and pointing to a boy—subdued light from a Gothic window—an elusive whisper from the tall kindly figure and a name takes shape on his lips—— The name of the boy he is pointing to—and the boy is myself—but I can't catch that name.

CHAPTER XXIV

A CROSS-CONTINENT QUEST—I WORK MY PASSAGE TO A HOSPITAL—THE BIG CITY AND THE OLD SCHOOL

For some time a certain place had been trying to project itself in my mind, like the outlines of a majestic building showing vague and indefinite thru a thick fog. Phantom-like slender spires and the bulk of large buildings—at times the visions grew clearer and more spacious; well kept lawns dotted with trees fitted into the picture. And always, with the vision, came an urge to travel far.

I felt that there was something back of it all; something vital to me, but forced myself to keep calm and wait. In due time I reaped the reward for my patience. With no shock to weakened nerves or sudden rush of emotions I knew one day that the place which was trying to register on my memory was far away, clear across the country. Familiar faces and incidents of my boyhood days gradually took shape in my brain. The vision was a goal I had to reach at any cost. But a trip covering three thousand miles was an undertaking fraught with difficulties. A lady who had become interested in my case moved heaven and earth to obtain free passage for me on the different railroad lines which spanned the country. One, the Santa Fe,

offered me free passage over their entire system. The Directors of the Santa Fe were most generous and even offered to arrange for sleeping berths and meals. Their lines, however, only run as far as Chicago, one thousand miles short of where I wanted to go. Other lines which run trains from Chicago to my proposed destination were approached and asked to give me transportation, but one after another they turned me down. At that time I was in Los Angeles, California. Summer was merging into Fall; my physical condition was not any too good, and I wanted to reach the Atlantic Coast if it were the very last thing on earth I would ever do. I met an old timer at the "Y" one evening and talking about things in general I remarked that I wanted to go East. "That's easy!" he said. "All you have to do is to go to San Francisco and ship on an Army Transport, won't cost you anything." That was welcome news to me. The next day happened to be Thanksgiving Day. I got up early and stationed myself on the highway leading to San Francisco. The first automobile which picked me up gave me a ride as far as Ventura, but it seemed that I should be stranded there for the night. Everybody seemed to have their cars full of people enjoying the holiday. I kept on flagging every car that went by regardless of size, make, or the number of passengers it carried. Late in the evening a car came rushing up the road at fifty miles an hour. I flagged it, of course, but more as a matter of routine than with any hopes. As it sped by, however, I heard the shrill shrieking of brakes and the scraping of locked wheels on the pavement; that car was going to stop.

It did, about a hundred feet away. The driver was all by himself; he asked if I could drive; sure I could! "All right then," he said, "Grab this here wheel and keep her up to fifty. I gotta make 'Frisco by morning! been driving all day and I'm all in." That suited me fine. He climbed in the rear seat, I took the wheel, and away we went. At seven o'clock in the morning we drew up at Market and Kearny Streets, San Francisco—four hundred and eighty miles in less than ten hours. The driver insisted that I have breakfast with him; as I twisted around to get out of the car I caught a glimpse of several boxes piled in the rear. Over steaming hot coffee and eggs the man asked; "Do you know what you have been driving?" No, I did not know; "Well, that's a special order for the Athletic Club, \$5,000.00 worth. You are a good driver. Any time you want a job, come and see me, everything fixed and safe, pay you good." I thanked him and left.

The very next day I was in a hospital again—nervous break-down.—By the time I got out winter had set in, and I was broke, had no heavy clothes, did not know a soul. I started immediately on the quest for transportation East. No Army Transports were scheduled to leave at the moment, but other ships were leaving for the East every day. Again I found assistance in the spirit of comradeship which is the age-old virtue of soldiers, young and old, Generals or buck-privates.

Thru such friends and well-wishers, I found a job on a ship bound for the place I wanted to reach and off I sailed. A good, easy job the first day out, but an

accident to another member of the galley crew caused a shift and the new job I was given was no sinecure. Back and forth from a sweltering hot galley, where I helped the cooks, into the freezing recesses of huge ice boxes to get supplies—doing that forty times or more a day for three weeks, and the supplies I carried from the ice boxes were no powder puffs—sacks of potatoes and kindred vegetables, hefty boxes of canned goods, large cakes of ice and the like.

The last week of it was a nightmare. But I stuck it out. My pieces of lungs were drumming all the time and my stomach would retain no food—not seasick—just played out,—but the end of the trip saw me on my feet. I landed in the city I had sought—only to stay a night. The next day I was gracing a hospital cot many miles away and for seven long months I was under the care of at least a dozen of the highest specialists the Veterans' Bureau could engage, buy, or draft from half of the Continent. They cut me open. They sewed me up. They x-rayed every inch of me. They thumped and squeezed and took analysis of everything that came out of me, and one bright day in April they sent me on a flying trip back to the city where I had landed from that ship.

The railroad terminal where I landed had been built long after I left home. Sky-scraper buildings towered where modest dwelling houses used to be, and the streets were thronged with crowds that dressed differently and acted differently from the crowds I had seen there last. Yet it was my home town—I could have found my way blindfolded. My quest led to scattered

and distant corners of the city. Sometimes there were symptoms of discouragement, but a new force was animating my purpose and I kept on.

The heart of the city itself was calling to me; the corner I was born in; the streets I played in; the schools and churches I had attended; the lively gang of youngsters who had been my chums. All of these things were neither phantoms nor ghosts of a dead past. They were the living, throbbing essence of the present, the today which had grown out of the past that had been my past in common with all the rest of the city.

The rush and clangor and medley of noises in the streets were not a meaningless orgy of disturbance to me. They were rather the diapason of the smooth running gigantic engine which I had known and loved as a lad—only it was geared to a higher speed. The surging stream of humanity thronging the avenues and the market places was not a mob to me. It was the same stream of humanity of which I had been a constituent atom, only it had grown larger. It had grown to a size commensurate with the years elapsed since I left home.

The school where my mind had been developed into a trained, useful force, and my body into a healthy specimen of manhood, was the first place I craved to see.

How did I know that I was near my school? How did I know the name of my school? Well I just *knew*.

Suppose you return home from a long trip and go

straight up to your room: You hear someone moving in the next room.—You know it is your mother in there, even if you did not see her or talk to her when you came in. You just *know* it is she, and you could not, for the life of you, explain why or how you *know*. In the same way I knew that my boyhood school was close at hand; a shroud was drawn around me by a mysterious, friendly hand: a shroud which shut out the clamoring of the throng and the changed skyline, and rendered me able to see New York City of perhaps twenty-five years ago. It enabled me to see corners of it which I loved most and the people whom I sought with the desperate hope that they might pluck me from the miserable limbo of forgetfulness, tell me my name, give me tidings of my own people.

That is how I knew that I had reached my home town, and my school.

Automatically I climbed the right elevated stairway, automatically I boarded the right train, automatically I got off at the right station—and there I was,—on Fordham University Grounds——

Great new buildings greeted my eye, no boisterous rollicking crowd of young people were there on the grounds as of old. It was Sunday. But the place itself, or rather the eternal spirit of the place reached at once into the depths of my soul.

Every blade of grass on the lawn, every stained window of the Chapel, every ivy leaf on the old gray walls held a remembrance. The very breeze seemed to contain an echo of the days that were youth and life and energy and hope. The Hushed Whisper was no longer

hushed. It was a chant of lads in the vestments of choir boys, the thrilling melody of a mighty organ at high Mass. It was an exultant *Te Deum* and the reverent tribute of *Magnificat*. It was the guiding tone of a profoundly wise Reverend Father preaching from the pulpit. It was the tumult of boys on the baseball fields and the thud of a football being shot goalward. It was my school, my old school that knew me before the furies of hell broke loose, and knew me after the years of oblivion, wanderings and all but perdition. A Reverend Father, teacher at the school, took me over the whole place—a Reverend Father, aging of body, everlastingly young of mind and heart. His was the flaming spirit of the crusader and the indomitable will of the pioneer. He had the knowledge of wisdom, the sublime inspiration of faith. His very presence dispelled the brand the battlefield had left upon me—and that day I was young, contented and rested.

CHAPTER XXV

“DOMINUS VOBISCUM”—THE RESERVE TREASURE OF LIFE

While on the grounds I visited the Chapel, and there occurred the most amazing manifestation of the eternal principle of life.

As I stood at the entrance, visualizing scenes enacted many years ago, I felt a compelling attraction towards a particular altar. I knew that I had served as altar boy to an old Reverend Father who used that altar in preferences to the others.

Suddenly the semi-gloom of the deserted Chapel was dissipated by a gentle aura of mystical light, and the face and bust of the old Reverend Father appeared in front of the altar. He spread his arms towards me and I heard him say “*Dominus Vobiscum*,” the Lord be with you. There were two men with me at the time, a priest and a layman, and they never gave any sign of having seen what I saw, or having heard what I heard. The person I saw had been dead several years—that is—his body had been dead. Of course it was not a miracle, not in the commonly accepted meaning of the word.

Neither was it a miracle when I heard a woman's voice calling me from the direction opposite to the one which I was following one day in France, when the

cannon knew no rest and the smell of the charnel house was in the air. That voice called to me one day, and I changed my line of travel and escaped quick and certain destruction. Here is how it happened.

An advanced training sector had been occupied by American troops on the Verdun Front. It was supposed to be an inactive sector, but near enough the firing line to give green troops a chance to accustom themselves to trench life. Of course it was within easy range of the enemy's artillery, and except for actual fighting everything was on the order of a front line trench; the same caution in entering and leaving; the same routine of "stand to" in the small hours of the morning; inspection of immediate surroundings; allotment of position to each platoon and so forth. On a gusty, gray morning in March, death came, invisible, unheralded, but in the most horrible form of all deaths, poison gas. Almost all of a company were put out of action, and the few who escaped had to run the gauntlet of a concentrated barrage which thundered from the enemy's guns to keep anybody from leaving the vicinity of the gas infested area. The gas masks we had were entirely inadequate, anyway it was too late to put them on by the time the alarm spread.

Telephone connections destroyed, it was up to some one to make contact with battalion headquarters. A runner volunteered; two runners, then more. Crossing a short stretch of open ground, I dropped into a trench leading in the general direction of headquarters, and hiked right along for a time. At one point there was a break in the trench, similar to hundreds

of similar breaks. They were for the purpose of keeping some sudden raiding party from enfilading the whole trench with machine gun fire. As I came within a few feet of the corner, a woman's voice called. I don't remember whether it called my name, but it was a call meant for me. A woman's voice: I heard it between the frequent crashes of exploding shells and I climbed the low bank and ran on open ground until I came to the straight-away in the trench again; then I slid down into it once more and went on. I do not know now whether I accomplished my mission or not, but that break in the trench held a place in my mind for a time till a party of engineers, sent out to check up on the damage done by the enemy's barrage, came upon the same break, and growing suspicious of some strands of barbed wire which lay apparently tangled at the turn in the trench, investigated carefully.

They found that the wire concealed a strand connected to the detonator of a mine and it would have required only the slightest kind of a pull to set that mine off; such a pull as a man would exert in brushing the wire off his path, or even in stepping on it.

The enemy had been there, infiltrating thru our lines somehow, and had done their work very cunningly indeed. But a voice, a woman's voice, called to me and without further urge I climbed out of that trench and escaped sure destruction.

Years ago, as any child might, I toddled, perhaps, too close to a steep flight of steps. The living voice of a woman warned me of danger and her hand guided me to safety. I played on, and the same voice and hand

stood guard over me. Some years later, a profoundly wise and deeply kind Reverend Father had labored to mould my spirit and the supreme quality which fitted him for that work was his unshakable faith in the Supreme Being. All else in life was only a passing condition; all things were good and right if the Lord was with you.

When bodily destruction loomed only an instant away, a woman's voice warned me of danger. When the path leading back to life seemed obstructed with impassable barriers, the subconscious memory of my old teacher took shape and found voice in front of the altar where I had knelt as a boy, and he gave me in audible and visible form the assurance of old. In both instances it was the reserve treasure of life—stored away in the subconscious—which came pouring out when dire need and death held sudden threat.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE PENALTIES OF PUBLICITY—GLORY GRABBERS—SPOT-LIGHT, STUNTS OR STARVATION

But in New York, as elsewhere, I felt the baneful influence of the buzzards. I found myself in a peculiar position. I could not possibly hope to get anywhere unless the public at large knew what I was seeking. I had no difficulty in bringing my problem before the public eye, for the newspapers never begrudged me space, time, or money. Always the best man on the staff was assigned to my case. Then a peculiar situation would develop. My picture would be in the leading newspaper of whatever city I happened to be visiting and it would be kept there for as long as I stayed in town, sometimes a week, sometimes longer. Thousands of persons would see the picture long before they saw me, so that when they did see me my face looked familiar, and quite a few declared and swore that they had seen me before. That happened especially in cities where I had a dim recollection of having worked or lived before the World War. I have had fellows come up to me and call me by a certain name and swear that they had worked with me, or that I had lived with them while a resident of that town. They were sure, quite sure; they remembered my looks, my

voice, some peculiarity ascribed to me, but when it came to a final check up, I always turned out to be an entirely different person. Also, the need I had for publicity opened up a new field of endeavor to a notorious and ever present sort of gentry, whose workings I had already sampled back in California in 1924. The scheme was so novel and attracted so much attention that it is worth repeating here. I found myself to be the husband of a two hundred pound lady and the father of eighteen children. She was absolutely certain that I was the long lost husband and father and she had a horrible tale of poverty and privation to tell. She camped on a vacant lot adjoining the hospital in which I was a patient. Their plight was really pitiful. Neither the woman nor the children had quite enough clothes nor bedding for the chilly nights we were having, nor was their food plentiful. I could not help them at all, for I had no money whatever, but the people of the neighborhood brought them occasional provisions and blankets. The thing got to be quite a circus; a fair sized crowd always hovered around the poor destitute woman and her young army of children. The police were finally forced to take notice of it, but they could hardly do anything about it until one day a grizzled old police sergeant happened to notice that six of the children appeared to be of the same age. A speedy investigation followed and the woman came out with the truth; she had collected all the children in a certain tenement district with the excuse of taking them for an outing, and was trying to get a little

money for herself by playing on the sympathy of the public—and so I was free and single once more!——

Then a beldame of some sixty years or more came to claim me as her son. At that time I was out of hospital and trying hard to hold a job I had as gardener-laborer at the Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. The lady was old, but seemed to harbor quite young ideas, for after I satisfied her that I was not her son she asked point blank that I marry her. She had a little house in the country and was drawing her dead son's insurance money and I could have a nice time of it—well—I am still single. It was not quite as bad as that in New York, but it was bad enough.

The advertisement value of my situation seemed to tempt certain merchants to exploit me. I was offered several soft positions if I would only identify myself with the firm they represented. For one thing, I did not feel capable of filling any position which required any degree of steady application, for another thing I had no use for the position of a decoy duck.

And there were the ubiquitous glory grabbers. The glory grabber is a specimen of *homo sapiens* who is naturally endowed with the ability to climb on the band wagon; the band wagon being any occasion, place, individual or event on which the spotlight of public attention happens to be focussed. He is, as a rule, a very plausible sort of a fellow and quite often manages to worm himself into positions and jobs which are more or less in the public eye. He is very careful to swim always with the current. He is a post-

graduate hand shaker and not at all loath to a seat in the front row.

Whenever my case was forcefully brought to the notice of the public and there were signs that I might get somewhere, the glory grabber was immediately on the job. I found that I had been the pet of powerful welfare organizations, without knowing about it—indeed I had been refused help by the same parties several times. I found myself held up as a horrible example of the war's aftermath whenever a drive for charity funds was on—but devil a bit of that money could I get, except a very, very small dole, and even that only as a personal favor from the person in charge of the funds. Nor is the glory grabber confined to the rank and file of ordinary human beings. I found him in places which are supposed to be held by the best each State has to offer.

I found him everywhere. Every time the spotlight happened to be focussed on me, he was there, and it was a hard job to stand and have him pat me on the shoulder and fawn on me while all the time I felt like busting him on the jaw. Then another funny quirk of human nature came to light. I could not make people realize that I had to eat and have some clothes and a place to sleep while I searched for my former self and my relations. It seemed that the most practical people had suddenly lost the common sense they applied to their own lives, and looked on me as something ethereal and unreal—something that could subsist on thin air.

I could not do manual labor, nor could I hold a position requiring sustained head work, yet I had to live.

I had several flattering offers to go on the stage and thus have a chance to tour the country, which was just what I needed to do in my search, but the moment I sought advice about it I was discouraged from accepting, and like the half-wit I was I did refuse them. I was told people would say that the whole thing was nothing but a publicity stunt, just for the sake of getting on the stage and I would lose the sympathy of the public. I believed it at that time, but I have come to the conclusion since then that a bank balance is the surest way to self confidence and self confidence is the most fundamental requirement in the difficult search for my lost self.

CHAPTER XXVII

A GLIMPSE OF THE PAST—A TANGLE OF RED (CROSS) TAPE

On the same day that I heard the voices and saw the face of that long dead Reverend Father, I received a telephone message from a Professor who had taught school at Fordham many years before. He had a number of photographs and old papers which he wished me to look over, hoping that some face in the photographs, or some item in the old College Papers would suddenly revive a memory or reveal some clue. I went to him at the appointed time, ten o'clock in the evening, and we went over several dozens of pictures. I saw many faces in the group photographs which I recognized at once—called many of the boys correctly by name, as the Professor attested, and recalled many incidents which were familiar to him. Moreover, I seemed to remember the Professor himself. He had, among other duties, supervised the staging of plays and presentations by students at the College when I was there.

It was a mighty interesting visit for me, and it lasted until the small hours of the morning, but it proved also to be my last chance on that particular trip to New York, for when I returned to the Red Cross house where I was staying, I found the old man in charge

there in a very excited frame of mind, and I was raked over the coals for staying out so late. That seemed to me very strange, for all the Red Cross people who ran the house knew where I had been, in fact it was they who gave me the telephone message from the Professor, and, besides, I had telephoned from the Professor's house to advise them that I would not be home until late. Anyway, that was the sudden end to my first feverish plunge into the tangled sea of my forgotten past. The next morning I heard more arguments and recriminations, and, as my nerves were on edge, I asked to be sent back to Washington. Anxious as I was to find my own lost self, and engrossed as my tired brain was in the sudden revival of boyhood memories, I could not help but realize and loathe the commercialization of my predicament by an organization which appeared to be nothing more than the Aristocracy of Panhandling.

I had plainly seen also that as far as the Red Cross was concerned my trip was only another link in the exploitation of my case for purposes of their own; this fact had been apparent from the moment I landed in New York. Although it had been clearly stipulated at Washington before I left that I was to be absolutely free and unhindered during my whole trip, I found a man waiting for me at the railroad terminal where I left the train, and he had strict orders to stay with me and be responsible for every move I made. I had to live at a Red Cross establishment in New York; I was told not to leave the place unless that man was with me and to keep him posted on the minutest

details concerning the developments of my search. I had no choice but to comply with orders, because the trip was financed by the Red Cross. Most certainly I had no objection to anyone taking whatever credit they could find, but just as certainly I felt irritated and nauseated by the narrow minded censorship imposed on me at that particular time when utter *freedom* of movement was *vital* to the success of my quest.

The man who was detailed to take charge of me also had other work to do. He was in charge of an office kept by the Red Cross at the Veteran's Bureau Headquarters, and he very quickly found out that it was physically impossible for him to handle both jobs. He was married, his family was dependent on the monthly check he received from the Red Cross, so he followed the only course open to him; he tried bluff; that is, he tried bluff *on me*. If he was a couple of hours late in keeping an appointment he would plead important engagements with high Personages of the Red Cross, or the Veteran's Bureau, or Members of the Cabinet of the United States, or the Peanut Trust, or the Clam Diggers, or something. The fact that his lateness absolutely ruined the day and spoiled any chances I might have had of seeing the right people at the right time, which was vital to my search, counted for nothing. If I found it necessary to make a sudden trip in some far-off corner which was somewhat difficult of access, he invariably pleaded more important business somewhere else, and he had a dead line as to quitting time. At six o'clock P. M. the whistle blew for him and he had to go home; he had sick babies or a sick

wife. The one thing at which he was a past-master was the religious fidelity with which he put the Trade Mark of his Organization on every move he made. He had it down pat. If we went to interview some man or woman about clues to my lost past, the first crack out of the box would be: "I am so-and-so representing the Red Cross; we have done a lot for Jerry here and have come to see you, etc., etc." Newspaper reporters were supposed to see me only thru him and anything that was written about me had to be mainly about how much the Red Cross was doing for Jerry Tarbot. Indeed there was hell to pay a couple of times when I dared to be interviewed on my own hook. Personally, I did not blame him at all. He had the softest job in the world and was getting enough out of it to support his wife and family in the style to which they had been accustomed. He was vested with a high sounding title, even if it was somewhat fictitious, and it was sufficiently high sounding to impress any poor unfortunate who had to go to him for a little help. He had made it his life work, and had developed a cunning which had all the outward appearance of intelligent, sympathetic understanding of true relief work. Yes! He sure was a past-master at it. I wish I could reproduce here the report he turned in on my visit; it would be illuminating. But I can't do that, for that report is supposed to be private and I would be betraying the confidence of a friend of mine, the Congressman who has it now. Some few months after that visit to New York, I met that man again; he had

been promoted to Chief Cook and Bottle Washer of half a dozen Districts. More power to him!——

Late in the Fall of that year I heard a reverberating echo of the same visit. I happened to be in a large city in Ohio, where it had been ascertained that I worked before the War. One local newspaper was making much of my visit, in fact the front page had little else than details of my every movement day by day. That was a chance the Glory-Grabbers were not going to miss. A telegram came from Boston, addressed by a Red Cross Agent to the local newspaper in Akron, Ohio, telling all about the wonderful work the Red Cross had done for me on that famous visit of mine to New York City.—Yeah! the wonderful work of throwing a monkey wrench into my very first effort to find traces of myself in my home town.

Even now, anyone can go to the main office of that Organization and they will be shown account sheets vouching for various amounts of money spent on my behalf. What the account sheets do not show is that every item of expense coincided precisely with the occasions when my predicament was smeared all over the front pages of the newspapers of the whole country. I hold no animosity towards the Red Cross or any other charitable organization. None at all. But I do hold that the very character of any charitable Organization should bar them—absolutely bar them—from contact with disabled veterans. The disabled veteran wants no charity; if it is forced down his throat, while he is helpless, it only delays his rehabilitation or, worse yet, it may make a perpetual

panhandler of him, as, unfortunately, has been the case many times. You can see plenty of examples by visiting Red Cross places, Salvation Army dumps, and other similar holes.

Nor is there room for any wise-cracking to the effect that I ought to be thankful for anything received, because, according to some Wind-Bag Congressman, I was never a Veteran. I *am* a Veteran—and, besides, at the time of the trip described in this chapter, I was a patient in a Veteran's Bureau Hospital and, as such, was entitled to be treated squarely.

CHAPTER XXVIII

"IT PAYS TO HAVE A PULL"

I returned to the hospital, and, after a few more months of examinations and treatment, I was discharged. An incident which took place in the hospital gave impetus to my desire and efforts to get out of there.

Two men, both patients in my ward, were given their discharge notices on the same day. The notice was given to every patient a day or so ahead of whatever date had been set for him to leave the hospital. Both of them refused to go; indeed, one of them got so worked up about it that he tore the paper to pieces and threw it in the Doctor's face. That Doctor, by the way, is one of the finest men I have ever met; he knew the real physical condition of that patient, knew he was really sick, so he took it good-naturedly and said nothing.

The other patient took his notice to town, in order to show it to some Congressman or Senator and try to get it revoked, as he was sick, broke, and a long way from home. When he returned to the hospital that night he found his bed occupied by another patient and no place for him to sleep. He remonstrated to the nurse. She, in turn, called the O. D. who, in turn,

called a couple of Orderlies, who, in turn called the head Orderly, who, in turn, sent in a riot call to the Police Station. By that time the ward was in an uproar; the poor sick lad had decided to go to bed, and had crawled in the same cot occupied by the new patient. Within a few minutes the Police patrol wagon rolled up to the door; also a couple of motorcycle policemen. The sergeant in command took in the situation at once; saw the humorous side of it and, briefly, directed the nurse to make up an extra bed, of which there were plenty, and said he would be back in the morning.

At daybreak the patrol wagon came back; two husky policemen marched over to the lad's cot, grabbed him by the scruff of his neck and by the feet, dragged him out of bed, threw him in the wagon—and took him to jail—!

Of course, the newspapers, the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, a U. S. Senator, three Congressmen, and others immediately raised a rumpus about such cavalier treatment being accorded a sick Veteran; but the boy was kept in jail a whole day. He was then paroled to a Senator from his home State and was given a room and some money by friends. In a few days he went home. He did, however, obtain a portion of his rights before he went home, for the affair was too raw, and the Powers-that-be had to do something to hush the matter up. So he did get a portion of the compensation he claimed was due him.

In the meanwhile the other boy, the one who had thrown the discharge notice in the Doctor's face, stayed

on at the hospital. He came and went as he pleased, made several trips to town, was notified again and again to leave the hospital, but refused to do so. On Good Friday he went to town in the morning and came back in the afternoon with a Veteran's Bureau Check for several thousands of dollars as back pay, and a disability rating of one hundred percent for life. Then he went to his home, which was in the State where a man who is very high in the present administration began his notable political career. Not for a single minute do I believe that the High Official knew about or would countenance such hill-billy doings, for he is beloved by the people and has shown a sympathy and understanding such as the country has seldom seen.

Yet the geographical position of a patient's home State seemed to be quite significant.

I do not even know which was my home State, so my chances did not look so good.

CHAPTER XXIX

IN WHICH THE VETERANS' BUREAU IS *NOT* PRAISED—
WORDS VERSUS DEEDS—THE GOD PUBLICITY—ECON-
OMY IS THE WATCHWORD—MILLIONS FOR PUBLICITY
AND NOT A CENT FOR BATH-TUBS—A REGIMENT OF
OFFICIALS TO A PLATOON OF PATIENTS—APOSTLES OF
WHITEWASH

Another reason I wanted to leave that hospital was because I was sick and tired of being exploited by the Veterans' Bureau Publicity Department.—What? You did not know? Sure! the Veterans' Bureau maintains at its headquarters—the Arlington Bldg., Washington, D. C.,—a fully equipped, highly paid, most efficient Publicity Department. The Veterans' Bureau also keeps an office, which is nothing more than a paid lobby, at the very seat of the Government, in the House of Representatives. The Veterans' Bureau is, as far as I have been able to find out, the only Government Bureau which was ever allowed to keep a lobby in the House of Representatives. You want to know what—how—why in hell the Veterans' Bureau should keep a highly paid Publicity Department? That's easily answered. The Veterans' Bureau has to keep a highly paid Publicity Department in order to do by word what they most certainly do not perform in fact. Did you ever read in the newspapers that the number

of Disabled Veterans war claims is getting smaller and smaller? Did you ever read that the quality and amount of care given the Disabled Veteran is always getting better and better? Did you ever read that the poor, down-trodden, ill-paid workers of the Veterans' Bureau are the hardest working people on earth? Did you ever read that the watch-word of the administrative policy of the Veterans' Bureau is *economy*? If you have read any of these optimistic statements, you have seen the work of the Publicity Department of the Veterans' Bureau. And it is entirely bunk. The Disabled Veterans are the stock-in-trade of a job-hungry, greed-perverted organization, and the Disabled Veterans are going to be kept a stock-in-trade as long as is humanly possible. Their claims, in the vast majority of cases, are always adjusted in a manner which is sure to call for readjustment at some future time.

The care which the patients are getting is no better than it ever was. At the last hospital I was in; Mount Alto, Washington, D. C., I saw a couple of magnificent new buildings being erected, but nine-tenths of the space in those buildings was for the use of the personnel and for offices. In my ward we still had only two wash-bowls for the whole lot of us—some twenty-four sick men—and only one bath-tub. The hell of it was that some of the patients were so far gone mentally that they used the wash-bowl to wash diseased parts of their bodies. The lone bath-tub was used by the orderlies to wash chairs, bed-pans, and cleaning rags.

The Headquarters are still teeming with a vast army of clerks of all kind.

The vaunted economy,—it is to laugh! In one hospital in California I saw in the Spring of 1925 over five thousand dollars worth of hogs die thru sheer ignorance and laziness on the part of the employe who was paid to care for them and happened to be the favorite of someone or another of the Powers-that-be. Not a word was said about it.

In the last hospital in which I was a patient, I figured up an expense bill of three thousand dollars a year just for flowers—yes, flowers. All the flowers I ever saw in the wards could be bought for a dollar or less.

If I had the time, and if it would do any good, I could fill a big book about the *economy* aspect. The very existence of the Publicity Department of the Veterans' Bureau is a glaring or flaming or something example of economical administration. Sure! The public must be told of the superhuman, wonderful, absolutely gorgeous work being done for (or to) the Sick Veterans.

Hell's bells! The Veterans' Bureau could not act decently to the Veterans if it wanted to. The man at the head of it at present is as white a gentleman as ever wore the star of a General. But his hands are tied. He can do nothing but drift with the current. If he so much as tried to do anything else he would lose his job—and that job is worth ten thousand dollars a year! He, a General, has to fawn on the Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Congressional Committee when he wants anything for the Bureau, and that

Chairman was just a Captain during the war. He, a General, has to keep a lobby in the House of Representatives. He, a white man, has to keep a Publicity Department—and that Publicity Department is manned by women—middle-aged women who have seen lots of life and are getting a fatter paycheck now than they ever did. If you incur the animosity of that Publicity Department the Lord help you! They can reach certain newspapers; they can use the propaganda resources of the charitable agencies which are allowed to ply their trade in the Veterans' Bureau Hospital; they can spread poison, subtle and deadly, and they do not hesitate if, perchance, the feeble squeak of a sick Veteran does so much as cast a shadow of danger on their precious jobs.

Efficient? oh, quite, quite efficient. That Publicity Department has succeeded in making a liar out of Abraham Lincoln. Remember what he said: "You can't fool all the people all the time." Well, just a few more years and all or most of the Disabled Veterans will be dead—and not a single blessed one of them was ever helped by the Bureau to regain real manhood, but the Veterans' Bureau will go marching triumphantly on, for its Publicity Department has accomplished in word what the Bureau itself has not accomplished in deed—because it can't; it's not allowed to.

The Disabled Veterans are the pawns of politicians. They are the material for thousands of political jobs and political intrigues and social positions and the individual splendor of megalomaniacs who were swept

into power by a mawkish wave of sentiment and flag-waving when the country was in the throes of post-war hysterics. Yeah! that Publicity Department! They have succeeded in presenting the Veterans' Bureau in the light of a generous, magnanimous millionaire who dispenses largess to the poor and needy. They have blotted out—entirely—the true conception of the Bureau's *raison d'être*. What was plain, bounden duty has been turned to magnanimity, and the poor, sick, feeble-minded, shell-torn, disease-ridden Veteran—your brother—your brother's son—has to go, hat in hand, groveling in the dust, to the Powers-that-Be and beg and snivel for a pittance to enable him to drag his mangled body and shattered mind thru life for a little while longer.

"Mister, can I see the Director?—I got to go to a hospital—my lungs—they——"

"Oh, yes, yes, take a seat! The Director is in conference just now, but someone will see you—take a seat"——

And a well dressed moron, the picture of health and affluence and impudence, will take that boy in hand and inside of a half hour the boy will go out thanking his stars that he is alive at all and wondering what possessed him to dare to disturb the Big Man in order to ask for a little care.

"Missus, can I get to see the Compensation Board? I can't work."

"Oh, yes, yes, take a seat!"

And some sportily dressed, glittering eyed female will come bustling out of a room and engulf that boy

in a sea of slushy English and technical terms, and the boy will walk out of there duly impressed with a sense of his insignificance and the condescension of the Great Lady in giving a little of her time to such as he—or he'll walk out of there with murder in his heart and hatred for a Bureau which has to countenance graft and chicanery and thrive on it.

What? you don't know? Did you ever read of the Guardianship Scandal of 1926? It's history now and the man is out of the picture, but the Disabled Veterans who were his victims are still gasping for breath and trying to figure out whether they are in their own country or in the prison camp of some conquering Hun.

That scandal was simply the boiling over of the pot wherein for years the rotten mess of Guardianship has been stewing. You know, guardianship of the Disabled Veterans by private individuals.

One man, all by himself, was holding down a big political job and, at the same time, was in full control of the financial and corporal destiny of a hundred and forty Disabled Veterans. He was their legal Guardian, and he was getting a king's ransom out of it. He was in sole charge of one hundred and forty disabled, weak-minded Veterans, all of whom were getting compensation and some of whom had quite a bit of money of their own in the shape of land, houses, etc.

The matter became so noisome that a Congressman—a real American from Texas—could not stand it any longer, and brought the rotten mess to the floor of Congress. And then a battle was waged, a furious

battle between the Apostles of Whitewash and the aroused forces of Righteousness.

Details of that scandal were brought to light. Details which should have sent any average man to Prison. Details of Disabled Veterans who had been kept in Insane Asylums by their guardian so he could handle their money. Details of mothers who had been forbidden to see their sick for months and years because the guardian wanted to keep those lads in the Insane Asylum. Details of abuse and actual violation of the law. But—that Guardian was merely given a gentle slap on the wrist. He was requested to resign from his High Political Position and relinquish his hold on the helpless Veterans.

And the Veterans' Bureau? Oh, yes, to be sure. They have specious and high sounding laws about guardianship. Sure they have laws about it. That's what the Veterans' Bureau lobby is for, to tell the World War Veterans Committee what laws should be passed for the Veterans, when they should be passed and how. Sure thing, neighbor, the Veterans' Bureau has also a highly paid, highly efficient, always-on-the-job Legislative Department.

Oh, *bunk!* oh, *Rot!* oh, *Hell!* If I had the money, and if I could multiply myself by a hundred, I could unearth a hundred or more similar cases of abuse of guardianship just as rotten as that one—on a smaller scale, perhaps, but just as rotten,—still going on.

CHAPTER XXX

A SUBWAY RIDE—A BALLGAME

Back to New York I went. A rich and prominent merchant gave me a job in one of his jewelry stores, just to give me a chance to get on my feet. I couldn't sell a bag of candy to a five year old youngster, let alone sell high grade jewelry, but I put in so many hours a day in that store just the same, and the eagle screamed regular on pay day. If I ever grow up and get rich, I am going to buy a lot of that jewelry some day. And a curious situation developed; by the looks of me, I was at least thirty-five years old, but in my head I felt and acted like twenty or less. There was nothing in life that mattered very much, no social position that inspired any awe in me, no thought of tomorrow ever clouded the reality of today. I just can't explain the way I felt, but it must have been unusual, to say the least, for I seemed to attract attention in whatever place I happened to stay for longer than a few minutes, even in New York, the most sophisticated city in the world.

Many times I felt the urge to buy a mess of chow, put it at the corner of 42d Street and Broadway and eat it off the sidewalk. I refrained from doing it, however, for fear of misunderstandings, and besides, I

did not like the looks of the police wagons, nor the inside of Bellevue Hospital where a police officer took me one day, in order to satisfy himself that I was not an escaped lunatic. But some day, ah! some day I am going to eat off the lap of New York City, my home town.

The Subways of the City were entirely new and strange to me. The muffled thunder and rumble of rushing trains was audible on the streets at times, and hurrying crowds diving into the entrances or emerging from the exits gave a hint of the magnitude of the underground system. Early on the afternoon of a June day I took my life in my hands and merged in a crowd entering a kiosk, as the entrances are called. The whole experience was so new and what I saw was so colossal that my brain could not even begin to grasp it. Automatic traveling stairways, mile-long platforms jammed with waiting people, candy booths, newspaper stalls, toy shops, clothes stores, novelty bazaars, lunch counters, soda fountains, fruit venders; a city underground. A couple of hundred cannons began to roar, some varicolored lights flashed out of a cavernous tunnel, and a train half a mile long drew up at the platform. Everybody got out, everybody got in, everybody tramped on everybody else's feet, some thousands of ribs were dislocated, some thousands of breaths knocked out; the train got under way; I was sitting in the lap of an indignant stout Jewish Lady and hanging on for dear life to the suspenders of a red-faced pop-eyed Irishman.

We careened along amid the roar of a million anvils

hit by sledge hammers; we stopped at other platforms; everybody tried to get out, everybody tried to get in, —away we went.

Suddenly it was daylight. I looked out of a window and found myself riding parallel with the third story windows of the houses on both sides. One minute in the bowels of the earth, the next minute three stories high in the air. New York is some city.

We rode on and on, the destination did not matter, the price is a nickel—ride all day if you wish, back and forth.

All at once I caught the flash of green grass marked with white lines, surrounded by immense tiers of seats, with a few boys playing ball on the grass. I piled out of that train at the next stop; walked back to the place and saw the legend on the gate:

—YANKEE STADIUM—

A crowd gathering at the turnstiles; I dug deep in my jeans, produced a dollar and in I went. A ball-game. There must have been fifty thousand people there; long before the game started every seat was taken and men were standing everywhere. *Play Ball!* A man came to bat built like a cross between a five ton truck and the Brooklyn Bridge; a hush fell over the crowd. The pitcher wound up, a wide streak hit the catcher's mit. Someone let out a piercing wail: "Come on Babe, do your stuff today!" The crowd took it up, "Come on Babe, slam it out Babe." The pitcher wound up, a wide streak flashed in the sun; the crack of bat against leather; the ball went soaring out of

sight and hell broke loose. The crack of that bat was one more vibrant call from my lost youth. It started a train of memories of young manhood: of achievements in fields of useful endeavor; blurred images of circular brick buildings, network of rails, belching smokestacks.

I sat thru the rest of the game. Somewhere on the playing field one of the players was enacting, more proficiently of course, a role which I had played in my lost youth. Involuntarily my attention concentrated on one particular position on that base ball field, the man in the catcher's box. Whenever the situation grew tense, whenever the pitcher got into a difficult situation, instinctively I watched the catcher and before the game was over I began to guess correctly the signals he was giving the pitcher.

For many days after that game I kept thinking and thinking of it. . . . Suddenly one night I saw myself, as a boy, playing catcher on the base ball team of a railroad shop where I used to work.

Up to the time this book is written I have not been able to go to that shop, for lack of means. But some day I WILL go there, and perhaps find a wee bit of myself.

CHAPTER XXXI

GOOD OLD NEW YORK—GROPING FOR THE PAST

A great old mother, New York! She houses her five and more millions of children; she feeds and amuses them and makes them work. Any week-day noon hour on Broadway or Fifth Avenue looks like a world's fair; all races, every conceivable type of individual; shop girls who make a two dollar dress look like a queen's mantle. Wealthy merchants in their shirt sleeves smoking a cheroot or buying a pear from the push cart of a sidewalk vendor. A couple of Syrians debating hotly in their native jargon, probably about carpets or rugs. A group of Italians politely admiring one another's finery. Half a dozen long-bearded Jewish patriarchs standing in the doorway of a cloak shop. A bunch of colored boys shooting craps. A hot eyed youth feeding his girl candy out of a paper bag. Good old New York.

Of course I could not help but notice and admit that everything seemed to have grown bigger and better, and somehow I could not repress a feeling that I had been cheated. Things and people had grown while I had no chance of catching up with them, so I shunned the newest creations of architecture and haunted streets and corners that had not changed much. I very soon

found evidence of the inexorable law of nature: either you grow or you stagnate and perish. The places which had not changed much were the refuge of failures mostly.

I began to grow rapidly, grudgingly at first, but very surely for all that. I even got so far as to be able to face myself in the mirror in my room and debate whether a certain thing I may have wanted to do was right or silly. I had work ahead of me which was quite a little chore—I had to annihilate, figuratively, twenty years or more of growth and progress in a city of six million people in order to find some clues to the infinitesimal unit which had been myself. There was no one I knew well enough to ask that they devote their time to helping me. So the first step, naturally, was to be sure of a perfect acquaintance with the being who had grown out of the war and was making the most he could out of such remnants of the past as he had been able to find. Talking to one's own image in the mirror is not silly—everybody does it, in a way. When you think, you are communing with yourself, and you do that often, and by doing that you develop confidence in yourself. I had to develop confidence in myself both internally and externally, because, among other things, not all of my face is the original one I was born with.

I stood at a certain corner one day, and looked at a spot where I felt I had been born and raised. Instead of the two story houses that used to be there, a great new building reared skyward, a mass of steel, concrete and brick weighing hundreds of thousands of tons and

quite impervious to all efforts to push it back in order to look for tiny footprints in the soil on which it stood.

I found a half a dozen old residents in the neighborhood and asked some direct questions. The net result was that no two of them agreed on the class of people who had lived on that street twenty-five years ago. I had to give up that line of inquiry. Even my old school could not solve the problem; the Reverend Father searched thru the records, but not one name of the hundreds in the book could be definitely proved as mine. It is in there, somewhere, but the difficulty lies in the selection of one out of the several hundreds. The school authorities could not be expected to keep track of all the students after they left school, and the task of tracing them all would entail enormous expenses and much time.

The same thing happened at two or three places where I feel sure I worked; the shop foreman at one of them remembered me, but how could he remember my name out of several hundreds of men who had worked under him and had come and gone during the past ten or fifteen years?

CHAPTER XXXII

FAILURES—MY NAME IS LOST

I had traveled clear across the Continent in order to reach New York, and even if I could not find my home, I could at least try to smash a hole in that obstinate barrier which hid my youth. I did try, and I did follow tortuous trails and dim paths,—and found failure at the end of them all.

I found failure in the form of smiling green lawns and palatial apartment houses where the wilds of uptown New York had been. The Bronx section used to be the happy hunting grounds for kids when I was a boy. There used to be a creek there, which yielded many a muskrat and fields where we trapped skunks and other small animals. The creek I found diverted and piped. The fields I found smoothed out into lawns and city parks and streets where youngsters played who lived in huge apartment houses that stood where truck farms and stubble fields had been.

I knew the place, though, in spite of the changes I pointed out where the creek bed used to be and my conjecture was found to be correct. I traced the windings of a path which, in boyhood days, had been our road to adventure, and in that also my memory was accurate. Where that path had been, there is now

a vast expanse of lawn and a number of buildings which form a part of Bronx Park.

On another attempt to fight the onrushing flight of time I found failure at the end of the trail: failure in the shape of death.

I had been feeling, for some days, a hankering for a certain street and a certain corner in Brooklyn. The name of the street would not register in my brain, but one Sunday morning I found myself drifting in its general direction. Down Myrtle Avenue I went till I reached Bedford Avenue. As I neared the corner my gaze fastened on a vacant store, and, like a flash of light, I knew. I saw the vacant store magically filled with furniture. It used to be the headquarters of a dealer in antique furniture. Often he had asked me to duplicate small fittings for him, to be used on imitation antiques. The vision was so realistic that I even saw the little, rotund furniture-man standing at the door of the empty store.

I lost no time in making inquiries around the neighborhood, and the second man I asked knew just what I wanted to know. He had a queer smile on his face as he spoke to me of the man I was seeking, and stopped in the middle of a sentence to ask quickly, "Do you wish to see him now?" I said, "Yes," "All right," said he, "do you see that boy carrying flowers across the street? Follow him, he is going to the same house where your man lives." I hurried after the boy. We reached a house and went upstairs—a crowd of women were on the landing. We entered a room and found the man stretched out on a catafalque.

But I did not give up.

Shortly after that incident, the Times-Press, a leading newspaper in Akron, Ohio, made me a generous offer. They heard that I was supposed to have worked in Akron and offered to pay all my expenses for a trip there from New York. They thought that perhaps familiar sights and perhaps familiar faces would kindle the faint spark of memory into a flame of knowledge.

I went. As soon as I reached the town I asked to be taken to the shop where I thought I had worked. The minute I entered the place a man rushed up to me and shook hands enthusiastically, shouting that he knew me. Yes, he knew me for sure, had worked in the same gang with me.

He was right, for I also remembered him,—but I did not remember his name. A few others also remembered me, but my name remained a mystery. The Officials in charge of the plant offered the aid of their whole clerical force to help me out, and we went to work on the pay books.

I looked over the list of all the men who had worked there at the same time as I did, but *I was unable to pick mine*—and, yet I must have actually looked at my name, for it was established beyond the shadow of a doubt that I worked in that plant at a definite time, and the list of names I looked at covered just that period of time. Another hope dissipated! Besides, it made me realize that I had even lost the power to know my own name when I heard or saw it. That was a hard blow, for I had lost, by that time, all hope of being correctly identified by anyone else, on account of

the many mistaken identifications which had fallen to my lot. My own name in front of my eyes—and I could not recognize it—an integral part of myself lying in plain view, the name to which I had responded a thousand times, by which I had been called since earliest childhood, and it was wholly foreign to me.

A macabre joke of destiny, a saturnine whim of fate—a grave flung open and a bit of myself resting at the bottom, still alive, but out of reach.

By that time it had become evident that all my efforts were not adequate to the task of fitting a reverse gear on the forward rushing engine of time. And that is the price of breaking nature's law—the price of *war*—for war is the retroversion to primeval brute. Once the hot blast of it has passed over a nation, it leaves in its wake charred and pitiful ruins of the thousands of temples which were the bodies and minds of youth, men and women. Progress, achievement, noble striving toward heaven and light are withered by the hell of carnage and fury and agony which we call war, and no human effort can ever succeed in wiping out the effect of it in one lifetime.

It is a law of nature; it is a law of God. Thou shalt not kill—for when you kill you not only destroy another man's life, but also blast your own. It applies to a race, to a nation, a tribe, an individual. Thousands of sorrowing mothers, who are nursing pitiful wrecks that were once their healthy sons, know this to be true. Everywhere in the land you see bits of broken humanity drifting aimlessly on the tide of fortune. I am only a single unit in the countless multitude.

If I live long enough, I may be able to accomplish my ambition—I may be able to dissipate the glacier which is holding the stream of life frozen and immobile. Perhaps some day I shall see again the waters flow free and serene towards the destiny of all human beings—or I may never break thru. Down thru the ice, a misty shadow beckons and lures; the image of youth arrested and frozen; faint, mysterious, whisperings—fleeting smiles on a sweet old lady's face—and the call of drums, muffled and vague; echoes of laughter and songs of long ago; glints of fervid life merging into opaque somber tints of neutral colors; and still swaying uncertainly to the rhythm of the Creator's Power, there lives in me the will to carry on and taste life anew. Perhaps I shall break thru: if I don't—well:

*“Here's to our Corps, which we are proud to serve,
Through many a strife we have fought for life
And never lost our nerve. . . .”*

I have adopted the motto of the U. S. Marine Corps as my own.

CHAPTER XXXIII

CONGRESSIONAL CHICANERY—A MOLEHILL CHAMPION

I should prefer not to contaminate this book with the following account of one of the grossest pieces of chicanery ever palmed off on the public under guise of justice and patriotic alertness. However, I must relate it as it is not only an integral part of my story but has also a bearing on the fundamental principle of our theoretically impartial justice. This account is entirely true and its incidents took place in the very halls of the U. S. Congress.

In the month of March, 1927, thru the unremitting efforts of a California Member of Congress, my case was brought to the notice of a Congressional Committee which has charge of all World War Veterans Affairs. Under existing political conditions, that Committee has the first, last and final say over all measures and acts designed to steer the hundreds of thousands of war casualties thru the maze of reconstruction and ultimate betterment. They say when, where, how, hospitals shall be built and managed; what amount of compensation shall be given for each degree of disability; they have the fate of each and every veteran absolutely in their control. What makes that Committee so supremely omnipotent is the fact that it is

the only one of its kind; I mean that, although there are two branches of the governing body of the country: the House of Representatives and the Senate, there is only one Committee. The Senate has no corresponding body.—This state of affairs gives that Committee extraordinary power.

True enough, their acts and resolutions are passed on by the rest of Congress, but the joker lies in the fact that the rest of Congress can only pass on what that Committee does.—No power on earth can do anything about what that Committee does *not* do.

The Committee deals in billions of dollars; it controls tens of thousands of jobs and positions; it has no Court of Appeal above itself except the Law Court, and that recourse is rather a pathetic joke, because an appeal to such a Court costs a great deal of money and, by a decree of the Committee, no Attorney-at-Law may charge or receive a fee higher than \$10.00 from a Veteran who feels himself unjustly dealt with and wants to go to Court.

The case of Jerry Tarbot came before this Committee.

For years Jerry Tarbot had been gravitating from one hospital to another; for years he had been endeavoring night and day to shake the dust of the hospitals from his shoes, for he had realized that the hospitals were merely the gridiron of politics, with the Veterans acting in the capacity of football. He had the memory of a battle-field emblazoned in blinding light in his enfeebled brain; he had met comrades whom he had known on the battle-field and been rec-

ognized by them; he had scars of the war on his body; he had been proclaimed a hero by exploiting newspapers and politicians; he had been hospitalized in war hospitals; so he felt justified in demanding an official standing. For over two years he had warmed chairs in the ante-rooms of the mighty, begged audience with the Powers-that-Be; in desperation he had dragged his sorry self clear across the country from California to Washington, and now a Gentleman of the West had heard his plea and taken up his case. After much dickering and many delays a definite date was set for the hearing of the case and, on the day appointed, Jerry presented himself before the Committee. The Chairman arose, rapped for order and said: "Ladies and Gentlemen we have before us the case of one Jerry Tarbot, a man who has lost all memory of his past life, and his incapacity is alleged to be the result of shell-shock and wounds sustained during the World War. No record of his service can be found by the Army or Navy, as his true name is not known; there is no record of his fingerprints, but he claims to have other proofs of his service. I move that nothing be done in this case, because if we act at all on this Bill, we shall be swamped by thousands of other Bills of a similar nature."

That speech immediately divided the Committee into two camps.

On one side was the Chairman with a following of Members whose only creed is to hang on for dear life to the Band Wagon of the Party in Power; on the other side were Congressmen who wanted the real

facts of the case, and did not care about any precedent which might be established nor the number of Bills such a precedent might cause to be introduced. As one Congressman—a gentleman from Mississippi—put it: "This Committee draws pay every day to take care of just such cases as this; if this man has proofs that he was in the war he is most certainly entitled to a standing; I deem it the duty of this Committee to proceed with the case."

Still the Chairman demurred; he had other Bills to consider, Bills of greater importance, time was short, only two weeks remained until Congress would come to a close. He was in favor of my Bill being postponed indefinitely. Then another Congressman—a gentleman from Massachusetts—spoke: "Mr. Chairman, if this man served in the World War and if his present disability is due to such service, there is not enough time nor money in the whole country to devote to his case; I move that the case proceed here and now."

The Chairman then tried another tack; he put on a fatherly air and turning to Jerry tried to persuade him to go back to a hospital and stay there indefinitely. No, Jerry would do nothing of the sort; he respectfully explained that what he most wanted was to forget the War and a hospital full of battle wrecks was the last place on earth to attain that purpose; he sought no favors; he wanted no charity, least of all from the Government. If the proofs that he had were sufficient to show him as a Veteran he wanted the legal standing of a Veteran; if the proofs were inade-

quate, he wanted to be so informed. He wanted an end to the backing and filling which had characterized his case since he had come out of that California Insane Asylum.

So the case got under way; the Chairman had sounded the keynote; it remained for some valiant warrior to pick up the thread and carry on. Such a warrior sprang to arms, then another and another. For a time it looked like a fight among the hunters to see who would shoot the buck—the buck being Jerry Tarbot.

The work of one particular Member of that Committee should go down in history as characteristic of its methods. He devoted himself entirely to the task of tearing the case to shreds and stamping the shreds in the dust and then ruffing his crest and strutting around the coop as the Champion of all times. He undertook a mighty task; he brought forth the heavy artillery; arranged for aerial attack; deployed his cavalry; stationed his riflemen; placed his shock-troops; took a pinch of snuff or something, also a chew of tobacco or something, then went at it. With all the brains of a good general and the cunning of a shrewd warrior he first looked for and found the enemy's weak point, the weak point being Jerry's physical condition and his mind distracted almost to the point of collapse. That was to be the point of attack.

The Honorable Member of the Committee at once dragged Jerry back to the battle-field. He wanted Jerry to tell of each and every shot which had been fired; each bayonet thrust; the detailed movement of a whole

Army Corps and its individual members; the conformation of the trench system of a whole sector, even the number of cooties and rats.

In less than no time he—the Honorable Member—had attained his objective, had scattered the enemy to the four winds and victory was his. Jerry had been dragged back into the mire of hell; he had been made again to visualize the slaughter house he had been trying to forget; and Jerry had lost all idea of what was going on while the Honorable Member swept his artillery and cavalry and shock troops into action.

Where the Chairman of that Committee had endeavored to kill the Bill at birth with the claim of lack of time and pressure of more important business, the Honorable Member occupied two whole hearings in forcing Jerry to fight the whole World War over again. But after the battle was over and the smoke had drifted away the Committee, or rather the Chairman, found that Jerry was still there, still to be taken care of. Well, they would dispose of him, permanently, absolutely, completely. The Honorable Chairman made an announcement to the effect that he had detailed a few Department of Justice Agents to investigate the case and an adjournment was necessary.

—End of that Chapter—.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE END OF THE FARCE

One week went by; ten days; two weeks. One more day and Congress would adjourn. I wanted to end the sorry mess, so I made the rounds of all the Members of the Committee—friends and foes alike—and begged them to use what influence they had towards getting my case disposed of. One Honorable Gentleman thought that as long as the case had been started I had a right to have it decided.

He got in touch with the Chairman and asked whether a hearing was going to be held that day. Upon receiving an indefinite answer he forcefully stated that if the Chairman was not going to call a meeting, the Members of the Committee would hold one on their own initiative. That threat got action promptly. Yes, a meeting would be called 'next day. And it was called.

Whoever staged that show most surely missed his calling; he ought to be drawing a large salary managing Barnum & Bailey, or some other circus, for the setting of the stage and the denouement of the plot would most surely be a credit to a ring master or a side-show impressario. Advance information of the Roman holiday had been passed quietly around and

the great hall where the Committee meets was jammed tight with spectators; newspaper reporters held a place of honor; Department of Justice Agents were there; Doctors of all kinds were there; a pathetically small group of sympathetic faces smiled at me from a far corner, but the large majority of spectators was the same crowd you see at a murder or spicy divorce trial, with a never sated hunger for morbid details and insinuating gossip.

The Honorable Chairman of the World War Veterans' Committee stood up and said: "Ladies and Gentlemen, I am going to show you this day that the man known as Jerry Tarbot is a fake and a crook, instead of being the hero and victim of the war you think him to be. I will show that he has never forgotten whom he really is and that he never served in the war. I have the report here of several agents of the Department of Justice who have been out investigating this case and also other witnesses."

Then a woman was called and she identified me as the man she had married in 1917 and lived with for two weeks—then she had left him and obtained a divorce.

Another woman was brought in and she identified me as a man she had known in 1916 in Sharon, Pa. She was flattering in the description she gave of me and was quite sure I was the same man she knew in 1916.

The Chairman then called on the Department of Justice Agent to read his report and the report was read.

The substance and purpose of that report was to show me in the light of an habitual criminal and crook. In 1917 I had been arrested for trying to call a friend out of a disorderly house which was being raided; in 1922 I had been arrested for borrowing money on automobiles which were not fully paid for, and to cinch my reputation as a crook, it was stated that right at that minute I was wanted by the sheriff of a half a dozen cities.

And the crowd gaped and gasped and the Honorable Chairman sat in radiant splendor, as the man who had run to earth the cleverest crook of all times—and the newspapers just ate it up.

While the tension in the room was at fever heat, the Chairman struck the master blow. He suddenly ended the meeting without considering evidence of my service in the war, and threw the Committee into executive session—at midnight of the day before final adjournment of Congress.

Of course, the result was a postponement of the case. Now, let us look at the facts.

One of the very first recollections which vibrated thru my confused brain when I woke up in that Insane Asylum in California in 1923 was that I had at some time or another worked in Sharon, Pa. I have a newspaper clipping from the San Francisco Chronicle, dated 1923, which says that I mentioned Sharon, Pa. Two years later, 1925, I was taken in hand by a very prominent nerve specialist in Los Angeles, California, and he gave me hypnotic treatments. During one of the treatments that doctor got out of me all the details

of my stay in Sharon, even the name of the landlady with whom I had boarded, and the street location of the house. Letters and telegrams were immediately sent to Sharon, giving the details of what the doctor had learned and several answers came back, particularly one from a woman who claimed to have known me well and to remember my name and all about me. Other people from that town sent in names which they claimed were mine, but the letters that woman wrote sounded more genuine than the others, so I decided to see her as soon as I could come east. When I did come east in 1926, I went to Sharon and stood outside the woman's house; she passed by me twice but gave no sign of recognition. I also showed myself freely in the lunch rooms, pool halls and the like, but no one knew me. I felt disappointed, but disappointments were nothing new to me, so I went back to a Washington hospital.

But in March, 1927, that same woman was brought to Washington from Sharon, escorted by agents of the Department of Justice, housed and entertained in fine shape, and she identified me before the World War Veterans' Committee as the man she had known by a certain name in 1916. She was kept in Washington for a day or so before the hearing took place, had been shown dozens of photographs of me in various poses, had had me pointed out to her—and so she knew me. Mr. Royal Johnson, the Honorable Congressman, the Chairman of the Committee, had scored one tremendous point. He had sent his sleuths to a town where I had been insisting for three years that I had lived

and worked, and he, or rather his sleuths, had found out that it was true, that I really had worked there. Wonderful work! And this woman who had not recognized me only a year before, knew me at once when she was brought to Washington.

The woman from Detroit, Michigan, who claimed I was the man she had married and divorced in 1917, also claimed I had a large tattoo mark on my person. I have none. She had lived with me for two weeks; she said that at that time I had a smooth face, no wounds on it, also I had no moustache; yet she knew me at once in 1927 when my face was all scarred up and I wore a moustache. She also had been brought down with a proper escort and schooled properly. The poor lady might have been a little confused, for according to her own word she had been married four times. She was forty-one years old, she said.

And now as to the prison record I was supposed to have.

In 1917, I was picked up on a charge of disorderly conduct and held one or two days. In 1922 I was accused of getting money on automobiles which were not fully paid for. The Judge who tried the case dismissed the charges entirely. I have with me the official copy of the legal proceedings in the case; but the dismissal of the case and the verdict of the Judge of the Superior Court of the City of San Francisco, California, carried no weight in some quarters, for I found myself hounded and persecuted all thru the country on that charge, regardless of the fact that it had been dismissed by the court. In Los Angeles in 1924 I was

picked up and interrogated sharply by a Federal Agent and his crew, again in San Diego in 1925, and here in Washington it was dragged out of its grave and paraded around for the benefit of the Chairman of the World War Veterans' Committee and the mob whose morbid craving for slush is never sated. When old man Gabriel blows his horn and we all troop around for the final judgment, some clever sleuths will try to block my way to Heaven with the charge that I was arrested in San Francisco, California, but he'll be careful to forget to mention that the charges were dismissed, and if the final Judge happens to be the present Chairman of the World War Veterans' Committee, I'll sure be damned to hell, because I was arrested once in San Francisco, California.

I have been shown the newspaper accounts of my arrest and subsequent dismissal of the case. The news was published in every newspaper on the West Coast, so they were quite public and yet, five years later, they were discovered as brand new evidence by the Chairman of the World War Veterans' Committee.

The situation was grotesque, to say the least. The hearing on Jerry Tarbot's case had started with the view of determining whether Jerry Tarbot was entitled to a standing as a Veteran of the U. S. Army in the World War. By the end of the third official day it had degenerated into a slam-bang, market place row over the moral fitness of Jerry Tarbot.

As far as history records, Jerry never, never laid claim to have possessed a pair of wings nor a halo. But he most surely had never sported a pair of horns

nor a forked tail. By the few shreds of information gathered about him, he had been just an average young man; anxious to forge ahead in the machinist trade; fairly proficient in sports such as baseball, hunting and the like. Also he had an eye for pretty girls. Then the war broke loose and something went blooey.

Was the Honorable Chairman of that Committee interested in having the case adjudged impartially? He was not. He had the Department of Justice Agents introduce matter in the hearing which was entirely extraneous to the case, and those gentlemen, well knowing what was required of them, did their work to the queen's taste—or rather, the Chairman's taste. The very small incident someone forgot to mention was that all the things Jerry Tarbot was accused of were largely the fabrication of brains bent on defamation, augmented by placing the worst possible construction on acts for which the Courts of Law held me neither responsible nor guilty. If I had pumped every last drop of water from all the Oceans; if I had leveled all the hills and mountains of the Earth; if I had lifted the National Capitol from its proper place and stood it on end in the Arizona Desert; if I had appropriated all the money, all the automobiles, all the wives of the whole country; if I had changed a duck into an elephant; if I had built a skyscraper on a peanut shell; I could not have been held responsible nor guilty in the eye of the law, because I, Jerry Tarbot, was insane—for years.—The malicious brains that conceived the idea of staging such a show as was perpetrated in the Hall of Congress were cunning; one

statement which was read into the Records was to the effect that I had never really forgotten anything about myself. I wish it were so. But regardless of the ever-present stark certainty that I have lost a vital part of my past life, I beg to cite the findings of nation-wide experts on such cases as mine.

As far back as 1923, the whole staff of Doctors at Base Hospital No. 24, Palo Alto, California, declared me totally and permanently disabled. In Washington, D. C., in 1927 I submitted to an examination by prominent Doctors and the result was published by the Newspapers all over the country; here it is:

“Tarbot’s case called ‘Lost Personality.’ Jerry Tarbot the wandering former service man who has lost his identity was examined by Psychiatrists Representative John J. Kindred, of New York, and Dr. William A. White, superintendent of St. Elizabeth’s Hospital, here yesterday, who diagnosed his case as one of ‘lost personality.’ Both doctors agreed his was not a case of malingering and that he was not assuming his pathetic state. His conditions, they said, was due to hysteria, produced by shell shock during the war. Their diagnosis is expected to result in a favorable report on the bill introduced by Representative Carter of California, giving him the status of a veteran and entitling him to the benefits which the law grants to veterans.”

Here follows copy of a letter from Frank T. Hines, the Director of the United States Veterans Bureau:

United States Veterans Bureau,
Washington, July 20, 1926.

Mr. Jerry Tarbot,
Mt. Alto Hospital,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

I am extremely sorry to have to inform you that all efforts which the Bureau has exerted to the present date have failed to establish your identity as a member of the military or naval forces, and I am sure that you realize that although there is every indication and belief that you were in the service during the war and that your present disability is a result of such service, the Bureau has no authority to extend the benefits of the World War Veterans' legislation except upon the discovery and identification of essential record of such service.

I do not desire that you gain the impression that the bureau has given up the case as hopeless. It is only my desire to inform you of the lack of favorable results following the pursuance of every clue which has been uncovered to this time. * * *

Signed, Frank T. Hines, Director.

Yet, out of all the malicious confusion and the projections of megalomaniac personalities which took the center of the stage, there came a note of human sympathy and understanding.

Several Members of that Committee held out the hand of friendship and comfort, particularly the two

Ladies, Members of Congress, who belonged to that Committee.

Theirs was the eternal sympathy for the fallen and the God-given urge to help. They tried to stem the tide of vituperation when it was at its crest and they offered moral solace after the battle was over. They asked no questions but only saw the awkward efforts of Jerry Tarbot trying to climb out of hell, and like the Lady who brought me flowers on Mother's Day, they held out the hand of friendship, as a flaming torch to light the dim trail I follow. A number of Gentlemen Members of that Committee also dared the thunder of the mighty; they had seen life—lots of life in all its phases. Some were Doctors, some were Lawyers, some were men of business; they knew, and they did not hesitate to stand up for fair play. That their efforts were engulfed in the maelstrom of politics and their voices in the blatant cacophony of self-seeking leaders does not matter, for they are the true Representatives of American Ideals and they are the ones who heard the ringing challenge:

*"To you from falling hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high
If you break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders Fields."*

CHAPTER XXXV

REFLECTIONS AND A WAR RECORD—MY REAL NAME HAS NOT BEEN FOUND

However, the whole miserable mess was not entirely in vain. It brought out in vivid relief the fact that a bunch of buzzards have been lying, deliberately lying, to the people of the United States. The lie is nailed right here and now—as follows: The Chairman and two or three Members of the World War Veterans' Committee predicated all their adverse criticism of my case on the assertion that: "*Every man who served in the World War is or can be accounted for.*" Also, that "*Every man who went to France had his fingerprints taken before he went there.*"

Both of the above statements are untrue.

I have met at least three men who served on the battle front and did not have their finger-prints taken at that time. Also there are at least a few thousand American soldiers who were sent to France and have never been correctly accounted for; the following clipping from a highly reputable newspaper is both illuminating and true; here it is;

NEW YORK TELEGRAM, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1927.

" . . . Of the 50,000 Americans killed in France the War Department knows of the burial place of all but

3,000. It is to find these 3,000 dead that men are combing the battlefields systematically, a work which will require ten years more.

"Last year 206 more burial places were found, peasants' ploughs unearthing the resting places of a few American soldiers, others being found in clumps of bushes or in gulleys where wounded men crawled to die.

"Included among the 2,925 missing of the A. E. F. are a hundred whose bodies have been found, but whose identity is unknown. War Department records are being searched for clues to a name on the roll of missing for each body."

Now then; if those three thousand men cannot be accounted for, how in the name of hell does anybody presume to say that they are *all* dead! It is the Army, the U. S. Army, that is searching for those lost three thousand. The U. S. Army does not go on wild goose chases. The U. S. Army does not lie,—especially in matters concerning the ultimate fate of its fighting members. Those men went to France. They fought. They vanished into an unknown destiny. Of course the vast majority of them are quite and thoroughly dead: buried by shell explosions, by cave-ins of forgotten dug-outs, by drowning in swollen rivers where they fell wounded or dead and were carried away to sea. But,—a large *but*——, some of them may not be dead. There were tens of thousands of men in the American Army who could speak the language of some of the other countries after the war; thousands of them had been born in those countries. Suppose one of those men

went crazy under the stress of battle; suppose he was wounded and picked up by stretcher-bearers of another Army,—which did happen thousands of times,—and suppose that the wounded man, in the agony of torn body and wavering mind, reverted back to his native tongue, he most certainly would have stood an excellent chance of getting himself into a complicated tangle of nationalities.

The fetish, so zealously expounded by the boot-lickers and the ninety-day-wonders, that the dog-tag would immediately identify the man's Army is *bunk*, for the Hospitals at the Front were a pandemonium of confusion at battle time, and dog-tags were collected as souvenirs. Some were deliberately lying when the assertion was made that I, Jerry Tarbot, could not have been a soldier of the U. S. A. because every American Soldier had been or could be accounted for. And that Someone knew he was lying. He knew he was lying and that was why so much time, money, and effort were spent to rake up erroneous statements, false accusations, and preposterous surmisings about my conduct before the war, during the war, and after the war. The purpose was to get for me the odium of my fellow-men.

I went to France in 1914, starting on the journey from North Dakota where I was taking a vacation and helping in grain fields in the neighborhood of a town called Cathay. I believe I took ship at Quebec. In France I was rejected for military duty but was allowed to serve as a civilian contact-man—interpreter—. On one occasion I happened to be in the neighborhood of

troops going into action and I simply went in with them. I was hit, hospitalized, severely reprimanded for having gone where I did not belong, and sent home.

In 1916 I went to Canada and made life miserable for the Recruiting Officer of the 48th Highlanders—but could not get in. In the Winter or early Spring of 1917-18 I shipped as a coal-heaver on a freighter out of Boston and got to France; there I reached the American Sector and bluffed my way thru for about a month.

That was not difficult, for, at that time, it was no trick to get a uniform; a few francs to a man who happened to be A. W. O. L.; a couple of bottles of cognac to a man detailed to the Quartermaster's Department; a surreptitious trip to the salvage heap, whereupon were thrown all kinds of discarded or "lost" equipment; or a dozen other ways. New details of men were being sent to this place and that place all the time. Some of the men in those details didn't like *la guerre* and dropped out of sight before they got to wherever they were supposed to go leaving vacancies in the ranks. And nearly all the replacements were the dumbest things on God's green earth till they were broken in, so it was easy to be dumb and not answer questions. Once you had been assigned to a squad and given a number, you were in the Army, boy, you were in the Army, and the Army was fighting a whale of a *guerre* just then, so if you showed any signs of life at all, there was nobody who had time to inquire about your pedigree. And if you could sling the Frog Parley voo, why you stood ace high—you could get to be a

dog-robber or even a corporal. I could talk some French.

The gang I fell in with, in action, or got in trouble with the Heinies somehow, I don't remember which, and I couldn't dodge fast enough, so I was hit a couple of times.

Back in the Base Hospital, somebody or other had time to check up a little more accurately on who was who, and the cat was out of the bag.

There was a Captain, a patient in that Hospital, and when he found out my predicament he volunteered to straighten me out. He had seen me in action in fact he had been the skipper of the outfit during the scrap, and had good reason to know me. He obtained some blank forms, I don't know where or how he got them, but he did get them, and I filled in the proper ones. A Medical Corps Officer of that Hospital gave me the works and as far as I or anybody else knew, I was a regular enlisted member of the A. E. F. Old Hindenburg or the Kaiser or some other cock-eyed Heinie took a fancy to that Hospital one day. A bunch of airplanes dropped a few bombs; some fellows were bumped off, others beat it—I must have been one of the latter, for I don't know what in hell became of me after that, still I am here—some of *me* anyway.

Not much of a War Record—but it is all there is.

I was physically unable to enlist or be drafted.

Now then, about the wonderful work of the sleuths in ferreting out my real name: during my efforts to get into the Army some way, any way, I may have changed my name, fibbed about my nationality, my age. I

may have assumed the name and nationality of someone I had worked with or known intimately. One assumed name, which probably I used for a time has been discovered,—largely thru my own efforts,—and the wolfpack of glory-grabbers have fastened on that as evidence unearthed by them to prove that I had never been in France.

My real name *has not been found*. I am still endeavoring, night and day, to dig myself out from under the ruins of a shattered youth. Should I succeed in doing so I may also find some day the obscure, out-of-the-way little house where, perhaps, sits a gentle Old Lady who has never lost faith nor hope.

THE END



APPENDIX

Army War College,
Washington, D. C.,
March 2, 1926.

From: Colonel Frank Evans, U. S. Marine Corps.
To: The Major General Commandant.

Subject: Identification of Jerry Tarbot; claiming service in Marine Corps overseas.

1. In obedience to instructions I proceeded to the U. S. Veterans Hospital, 2650 Wisconsin Avenue, Washington, D. C., on February 26, 1926, to observe Jerry Tarbot, who claims to have had service overseas in the Sixth Marines, and who had stated that he knew me while I was Regimental Adjutant in the Verdun Sector in the spring of 1918.

2. While I asked no questions I framed a number that appeared to me as pertinent.

3. Tarbot was in a highly nervous condition, and his answers and comments were at times incoherent, and at other times direct and given as though he fully comprehended the subject. It was apparent that his so-called service was in both the Verdun Area and in the Belleau Woods area so far as his claim went; but he jumped straight from one area to the other with but one reference to the billeting areas in which the Second Division was stationed between service in those areas. In this instance he spoke once of Marines, a town in the area north of Paris through which the division moved early in May. This town excited great interest among the Marine Brigade because of its unusual name, and Tarbot's casual reference to it was rather striking.

4. The incidents in connection with the questioning of Tarbot that appeared pertinent to his claim of service in France with the Sixth Marines were as follows:

(a) His persistent disclaimer that he had ever enlisted in the

Marine Corps in the United States; and his absolute lack of interest in any questions bearing on Parris Island or any officer or men stationed there.

(b) His volunteered reference to Lieut. Robinson of the 83rd Co., 6th Marines, as having gone on ahead of his men at Belleau Woods in an attack, and being killed while in advance of them. Lieut. C. C. Robinson was killed at Belleau Woods while leading his platoon against a machine gun nest. In answer to a question as to whether Robinson was a large or a small man he promptly answered with a very accurate description that was almost photographic. This was true not only in regard to his height and weight but to the rather striking color of his hair, which was blonde and yet suggested an auburn color.

(c) His prompt answer, with an appreciative laugh, to the question of what the men called Major Sibley. He said "they called him Grandma, and hell, he liked it!" Major Sibley's nickname in the regiment was "Ma" Sibley, an affectionate term given him because of his great solicitude for the interests of his battalion, and his habit of "mothering" them.

(d) His prompt answer to the names of First Sergeants Daniel O'Brien and Daniel Daly, of the Headquarters and Machine Gun Companies, respectively. His amusement, and profanely affectionate reaction to these two famous characters, was typical of that with which all the men recall them.

(e) His reference to being in Bouresches with a handful of men from the 83rd Company.

(f) His unsolicited reference, as I recall it, to the wounding of Colonel Catlin.

5. It was obviously impossible for a man in his mental condition to supply gaps in the movements of the regiment, or to recall officers and men with whom he would have been in contact had he had service with the 6th Marines. A few he remembered clearly and others either vaguely or not at all. When asked if he had ever seen me—I being referred to as Captain Brown—he stated that he did not but that if I had been in uniform he might.

6. With regard to the possibility that Tarbot might actually have served with the 6th Marines by attaching himself to it either at the Verdun area, in the billeting area north of Paris, or at Belleau Woods, without having been enlisted in it, the following contingencies present themselves:

(a) At the Verdun area French Territorials were used as either labor troops or Lines of Communication troops in the back area, and I have seen them close to the Regimental P.C. at P.C. Bouee. In addition when we moved into the Haudiomont-Tresavaux sector on our arrival in that area, the French were on our right and left. On our right, at Haudiomont, and on our left, at Tresavaux, we had liaison groups of approximately 20 men with the French. Had he been in a French Territorial outfit, or in one of the regular French units in our flanks, he might have attached himself to the regiment at the time of our relief from that area and not have been noticed in the subsequent movement to a billeting area.

(b) On moving from our first billeting area by train the Sixth Regiment was detrained at Isle l'Adam, and then marched to the area north of Paris, with the regimental headquarters at Serans. The brigade marched through Marines, to which town he referred. The men were comparatively soft after their long tour in a stabilized defensive area, and the weather during the march was unseasonably hot. There was considerable straggling in some units and some men, overcome by the heat, did not rejoin the regiment until a few days later, or were placed in hospitals along the route. There was also an epidemic of influenza, and some men did not rejoin the regiment until after it was back in the line. With these casualties rejoining at such a time it would have been possible for a man like Tarbot, who had undoubtedly seen service, and spoke both French and English, to have joined.

(c) With regards to the Belleau Woods action our casualties were excessively heavy; many casualties at the beginning were evacuated on the flanks through either the 23rd sector or that held by the French on our left, and no records furnished us of such evacuations. Such men, not passing through regimental channels, were further passed to the rear and in some cases weeks elapsed before we could finally locate them, although men in their platoons knew that they had been casualties. In addition we lost the bulk of our company clerks in the early phases and when temporarily relieved by the 7th Infantry we were obliged to train new clerks. After that experience we held out our company

clerks *but in that interim records were lost and*, with replacements arriving in drafts as high as 500 men, a man like Tarbot could have served without having aroused comment.

6. I do not, however, believe it could have been possible for a man like Tarbot to have served with the regiment in both the Verdun and Belleau Woods areas. On leaving the first area the Division was billeted between Bar-le-Duc and Vitry-le-Francois, with 6th Regimental Headquarters at Vanault-les-Dames, to the best of my recollection; that is with respect to the regimental headquarters. In this area much time was spent on refitting, on trying out the new formations for open warfare, and a man could hardly have stayed on the rolls of any unit who did not regularly belong to it. This leaves a gap in which it would have been practically impossible for Tarbot to have been with the regiment, but this is the only gap between the areas where this obtained.

7. There were many cases throughout the war where a man, once evacuated, returned to his organization without having been regularly discharged from a hospital. In other words they took French leave, and their records were not with the regiment when they did return, but they continued to serve pending the arrival of their records. On their return the company to which they were originally attached might have undergone a change in its personnel of 40 to 80 percent, or the man may have been taken up on the rolls of another company that was under strength, and find himself in a practically new environment so far as his old associates were concerned.

8. I was not able to identify Tarbot as ever having been at the regimental headquarters in any area.

9. Because of the foregoing conditions it is possible that Tarbot may have served with the 6th Marines without having gone through a recruit depot in the United States or ever having been regularly enlisted, but only for a short time. I feel that he did know certain men and officers, and certain details connected with the 6th Marines from actual experience and not through having heard the talk of marines with whom he may have associated only in his hospital experience.

10. In conclusion it is difficult for me to believe that Tarbot did not see hard service in France, or that he did not actually serve for a brief, but hectic, period with the 6th Marines, even

though it could have been only of an irregular nature so far as enlistment goes.

FRANK E. EVANS.

Reported by the Swedish Press

Stockholm, November 29, 1927.—Gustaf Duner, a Swedish soldier of fortune, born in 1880, the son of a Professor of the Upsala University, at the outbreak of the World War entered the hostilities as a commissioned officer in the British Army.

Duner was seated in a dug out when warning of an imminent explosion came. He snatched a coat, supposing it was his, and threw himself on the ground. He was lifted high in the air by the explosion. He later found himself in a hospital with his memory a total blank.

He was registered in the hospital as Captain De Montait, that being the name on a letter found in the pocket of the coat Duner had seized instead of his own. It has since been learned that the real De Montait had been blown to pieces by the explosion and Duner found missing at the time, was reported killed.

A few months later the supposed De Montait fighting again in the air force, a crash ended his active participation in the war, and he was invalided out, receiving a one hundred percent disability pension from the British Government.

Soon afterward he made a romantic marriage in London. Quite recently he chanced to overhear a Swedish conversation and discovered that he understood that language. This started another of the many quests into his past. He went to Sweden, where his case was widely "broadcast," with the result that he is now restored to his family and name.

COPY

(The original letter is held by the Red Cross at New York City)

FORDHAM UNIVERSITY
New York, N. Y.

April 23rd, 1926.

Dear Mr. Hall:

To comply with your request I am sending you my opinion as to whether the Amnesia victim called "Jerry Tarbot" went

to Fordham College. I was a professor at Fordham College 1904-1909. I returned to it in 1925. During those 16 years great changes took place in the building. To-day no interior is as it was in 1909. And yet "Jerry Tarbot" spoke of and asked about things that to my certain knowledge were part of the furnishings of the buildings twenty-two years ago, and have since disappeared. What he said of one professor, the Rev. F. O'Reilly officiating in a certain place in the Student's Chapel is likewise correct. Fr. O'Reilly died in 1911.

Certainly anyone knowing the Fordham of twenty years ago, and hearing "Jerry Tarbot" talk about Fordham as he does, would be constrained to say that he must have been a student here. That is the way I feel about it, after spending two hours with him on Sunday, April 18th, and again on Wed., April 21st.

I am

Very sincerely

(Sgd) (Rev.) HENRY MCGARVEY, S.J.







